Ronald "Rambo" Kim

Ognian "steel" Gueorguieu





PREFACE

The Art Of Counter-Strike (TAO-CS) took the better part of a year to design, months of research on the part of the authors and hundreds of man hours in the writing, recording and rendering processes undertaken to bring you the finished product. Its pricing was carefully considered and after deciding a very fair price in relation to what the buyer gets the authors went out of their way to add every kind of bonus and extra they could to make the product the best value for money it could be. We set out with a goal to provide the best learning resource we could create; we worked at that goal until we had covered every topic and nailed down every concept. We then polished what we had and refined it over and over in the name of thoroughness and because we believed in not just creating a good product but one which would stand the test of time and be a tome of collective knowledge players could return to over and over to learn new things from each time. By reading this paragraph you should understand what TAO-CS means to us and how much we value it and think highly of it.

A similar situation should occur for the reader. After spending your hard earned cash to buy this learning resource and using your valuable time to learn its secrets and let the more advanced topics simmer until you've gotten to the very essence of them it's only fair that you too should understand the value of TAO-CS for yourself and for us. This goal has been completed and we did everything we could to get there, that makes TAO-CS not only something of value for us but for you the consumer also. By attempt-

ing to crack the protection or otherwise distribute any elements of TAO-CS you are both devaluing the product of our toil and your own copy. If you want to see more products and of the same quality and attention to detail from the TAO-CS creative collective then it is vital you respect the value of the product we've created here and which you've bought into by getting your own personal copy. There are few people with high speed computers and internet access who cannot afford \$29.95 for something which gives them more education and experiential data than a hundred lessons priced at a similar price per unit. If you the reader can respect what we've done we'll continue to respect you as a consumer and provide the best and most innovative product solutions we can. We'll also maintain our pledge to keep these products at the same high value by securing them and not allowing others to distribute elements of them. Respect our efforts, respect TAO-CS and respect yourself.



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WHAT IS THE ART OF COUNTER-STRIKE AND WHO IS IT FOR?

To fully understand any subject requires much time taking in all the available information on each aspect of it and then a reflection period where these separate parts are pieced together in one's mind and conclusions are drawn or may arise naturally over time. As a product TAO-CS is a guide to playing competitive Counter-Strike, improving the player's overall game and if followed correctly lead him further down the path towards real success. The more personal motivations behind the different personalities getting involved with the project is revealed in the 'About the authors' area of this introductory section but as a general collective the aim was to create the most complete guide to competitive Counter-Strike possible at this time. This meant not only having suitable candidates providing the information from which the guide would be created but also having the right people to take that information and make it understandable to the reader and display it in a fashion which both aids their intake and helps them see how each piece of information connects to others to form a coherent philosophy and set of guidelines for playing.

A stigma associated with guides for most subjects is that they are intended only for the uninformed or beginner level of participant, this is not the case with

TAO-CS. One of the key goals from the outset of the creation process was that TAO-CS would be aimed at all levels of Counter-Strike player, from the least to the most competitive. This meant not only providing a sound fundamental basis on all the topics for the beginners but then adding to that information to help intermediate players improve their game and understand more clearly principles and concepts which had previously eluded full understanding. From there a third point of view was considered and incorporated into the process, that of catering to even the highest calibre of competitive player. Since the authors of TAO-CS have soared to the highest heights of competitive success Counter-Strike has to offer they were able to impart more advanced concepts and information for those players who are on the fringe of being at the championship level or even at the championship but without the kind of perfectly rounded game all players should aspire to possess. This aspect of TAO-CS may seem lofty but a simple look at the names involved with its production will show that experts in all the different areas of both Counter-Strike and the fields relevant to the production of the best guide possible were brought together to ensure the end product was the pinnacle of its kind.

Who made The Art Of Counter-Strike and how are they qualified?

Validation and reputation are established and cultivated in a number of ways, whether that be through accomplishments or the respect of one's peers. The creative collective behind the existence TAO-CS is:

- Ron "Rambo" Kim
- · Ognian "steel" Gueorguiev
- Duncan "Thorin" Shields

Rambo and steel have both established themselves as some of the best players to ever compete in Counter-Strike through both their accomplishments and the degree of respect they have garnered over the years from their peers and the multitude of fans they have reached through their play. Thorin has likewise es-



tablished himself as one of the world's elite in his field. As one of Counter-Strike's premiere journalists and writers his work with a number of communities and sites has informed and entertained fans the world over.

Rambo has been placing in the top 3 of the biggest competitive Counter-Strike tournaments in the world for over 7 years. His sustained level of achievement combined with the thousands of minutes of lessons he has given on the subject over the years are a testament to the degree to which he has made understanding every aspect of Counter-Strike a lifetime's obsession. Coming into this project he knew meant having to give up all his secrets, all those little moves the players at the top of their game build up an arsenal of to fool and mystify their opposition. All of this was gladly sacrificed to the overarching aim of creating the bible of competitive Counter-Strike. His obsession with being the best player he can be spilled over into creating the best Counter-Strike guide he could create.

As the first Counter-Strike player to win both a WCG gold medal and a CPL championship title steel immediately set himself apart from others in the history books as well as in the Counter-Strike servers. As a Canadian his place on the first fully sponsored American Counter-Strike team bears witness to the levels his talent and dedication have risen to on his journey to hone his game to the utmost degree. steel's path to the top is as unique as his own refined style of play and allows him to approach and interact with the process behind the creation of TAO-CS from a different point of view.

To take a single player's opinions and lessons from his career and create a guide for all players would leave gaps where topics were lacking just as no one player's game is perfect to the extent that he has no weaknesses or areas for improvement. Combining the collective understanding and experience of both steel and Rambo allowed all bases to be covered and all topics to be discussed and dissected on the way to creating the most complete manual of competitive CS player imaginable. Taking into account these different approaches to the same goal incorporated in the design process players are not only given multiple ways of looking at any given topic to find one which they understand but also a variety of styles of approach to each from which they can mould and refine their own game to be the best it can be. The aim was not simply to teach players how to play like Rambo or steel but to show what they could take from the games of both to improve their own individual style of play to being the best it can be in their own context.

With steel and Rambo covering all aspects of Counter-Strike theory, technique and experience the creative team is completed with the anchoring of the project around Thorin. After years of working as a professional journalist and writer within the blossoming field of esports Thorin has attended numerous major events in a variety of locations around the world, on his way observing professional players in their element and learning what makes them tick. His hundreds of written, audio and video interviews have been a process of constantly refining and improving the ability to extract the most interesting and accurate information from the best Counter-Strike players in the world and transmit it to the reader in a form understandable to him as a person and player. This is where the creative process of TAO-CS takes bloom and realises its potential. Even the most earnest effort from a professional Counter-Strike player to develop and produce the most complete guide would not be without road blocks and difficulties, even on the most superficial level it is obvious that players whose natural tendencies are towards success and improvement will have difficulty in relaying information to those who do not possess those same traits. By having them filtered through and translated by someone who is an expert in the field of writing allows the



reader to engage with some of the finest Counter-Strike minds of our era while doing so in a space where the information he receives is easily understood and the principles and concepts expounded upon are relatable his own game and mindset.

Just as the creative ability which informed the play of Rambo and steel allowed them to win multiple Counter-Strike championships and enabled them to be in a position to explain the various aspects of competitive play for a project such as this so Thorin's creative aptitude for combining and displaying such information makes him the perfect third entity for this streamlined and efficient collective. Rambo and steel's willingness to provide any and all information on the variety of aspects to playing successful Counter-Strike combined with Thorin's ability to extract that information efficiently. accurately and then relay it to all levels of reader are what sets TAO-CS apart from any guides which have come before it. When three experts in their fields come together with a collective goal of producing the best possible product it is the reader who reaps the benefits of that toil.

How was TAO-CS made?

At all times directed by their goal of creating the most complete guide they could the authors sought to use every approach to its creation to assure the quality of the end result. First months were spent discussing and breaking down the exact topics which would be featured in TAO-CS. From here those topics were further refined and broken down into their smallest units of

significance so no area was left uncovered or undiscussed. With the authors being located in different national regions (Rambo in the USA, steel in Canada and Thorin in the UK) these initial stages of the project took place online, textually and via sessions using voice communication software. Once all topics had been defined and requirements had been set for the information to be gathered and compiled the following months were spent with steel and Rambo discussing each of the topics, the information generated being stored by Thorin and additional information being extracted where necessary to ensure completeness at all times.

When everything that could be completed online had been completed the creative team met in person for a period of time to ensure all topics were covered as well as possible and that different creative solutions to displaying the information were devised. TAO-CS would not be a victim of distance in being limited by the boundaries of text, instead areas were identified where the player would more fully understand through the mediums of pictoral representation or audio and video solutions. High quality audio recordings were made and stored so they could be edited into video explanations and demonstrations of a number of key concepts intrinsic to both the improvement of the player and his being able to crack the subtleties of what professional players are doing in specific situations that is making them successful.

After exhausting all online and face-to-face solutions to the problems of creating the most complete Counter-Strike guide imaginable the remaining task was the physical creation of the guide itself. Thorin wrote up each of the sections from the voluminous amounts of information gathered from the two Counter-Strike champions. Once translated into sections all types of player could understand the guide underwent a process of editing which involved steel and Rambo reading each section and responding with revisions which were then integrated into the guide until there were no revisions left to be proffered and the aim of making the guidelines and principles as clear from their pure source to the player reading it had been achieved. The multimedia content added an additional layer of interest and explanation for the reader as now instead of merely reading he could also get direct audio and visual feedback in watching real examples of the players demonstrating or explaining certain techniques either in isolation or from real matches which took place in their championship-winning careers.



What does The Art Of Counter-Strike (TAO-CS) the name, refer to or mean?

Since it was written in the 6th century BC Sun Tzu's 'The Art of War' has been praised as one of the most brilliantly constructed military treatises on tactics and strategies ever to be created. Taking from this epic historical artefact the philosophy of getting to the core of every problem and finding pure and tangible answers alike we set about applying the same kind of goals to the matter of competitive Counter-Strike. Counter-Strike is an art form in as much as it is impossible to write rigid rules for every single situation or action which must or can occur within a single round or match. The game flows from the competitors' experiences and they express their imagination in the decisions they make every step of the way. Were things any other way every competitor would by now have figured out all the secrets and tricks to becoming a great player.

With this challenge in front of us we set about approaching Counter-Strike from a scientific perspective, looking at what can be observed and replicated. From these observations and calculations we built up guidelines and different strategies which could be employed by all levels of competitive player. We then made the guide as complete as we could by adding onto that solid foundation the kind of abstract but experientially definable aspects which the truly great competitor must harness to find success within the game. Approaching the task of relating and translating these to the reader in a number of innovative ways we have created an end

product which both teaches the player in the sense of showing him what to do as well as allowing him to teach himself by providing all the tools and resources he needs from which to grasp any concept or situation that may come his way.

As homage to the source of our inspiration we named this project The Art Of Counter-Strike. We also understood that the acronym created by that name, TAO-CS, when said as a word became "Tao cs". The Chinese character 'Tao' means 'the way and order of the Universe'. So when we combined the two together it gave us a meaning which was essentially: the way of Counter-Strike. This is a fitting name for the project we set about to create, being in line with our philosophy.



Ron "Rambo" Kim

Age: 23

Rambo's Counter-Strike career began with him LANning with friends in the Texas area. He began attending local LAN tournaments and soon as a member of rs (Riot Squad) with his friends he begun to rise up the competitive ladder. When rs merged with their chief rivals TRU to form syn for the Babbages event Rambo would have his first taste of playing with one of his future team-mates, Porter. A 5th place at the Babbages CPL may have seemed a humble beginning for someone who would go on to be one of North America's greatest players but from syn he went on to join CK3 (Clan Killers 3) where other future X3 team-mates were playing.

From the ashes of CK3 rose X3 (Xtreme 3) a team whose starting five dominated the North American clan scene losing almost never and beating even their closest rivals by large margins. With X3 Rambo won his first major Counter-Strike tournament, the first official one run by the CPL, the Speakeasy CPL event. As well as taking home his share of the \$10,000 first prize money Rambo was perched firmly atop the competitive ladder in North America both online and in LAN competition. A fact only further impressed upon the community by X3's domination of an invite tournament held by the CPL at their headquarters. The top four American teams were invited and the winners would receive pro-

totype Intel processors capable of speeds far beyond those available on the commercial retail market. Needless to say at the close of the tournament X3 were still top dogs and Rambo had a new high speed gaming rig in his possession.

The next major tournament for Rambo would prove to be the biggest of his life until that point, the CPL had organized a CPL world championship event with a prize purse so staggering the winners would receive \$50,000 and the second place finishers \$25,000. This quickly attracted a collection of the best teams in the world, including both Rambo's X3 and



the mighty Swedish giants NiP who had dominated the European CPL events that year. After battling each side of the tournament brackets as #1 and #2 seeds NiP and X3 met as perhaps they were always destined to in the finals. Out of the three maps played between the two teams in the tournament X3 were able to win one but lost the other two and so left in 2nd place with \$25,000. Not only had they produced an epic final still remembered the world over today but in beating NiP on a map X3 had shown as team they were one of the very best in the world and that their individual players could play with a team considered still to be one of the greatest of all time.



The fallout of the biggest Counter-Strike tournament to that point was that when the event had ended motivation within X3 waned over the coming months and the team was disbanded. Before the next CPL could arrive Rambo along with some of his X3 team-mates created 3D (Desire Discipline Dedication) After teething troubles at their first CPL event the team revamped the roster to bring in some new blood in the form of top competitors of the time, including steel. Attending the WCG saw the team working out the kinks in their team play without making a significant impact but had Rambo winning a bronze medal in the continent versus continent section of the event. The new 3D stormed to victory at the very next CPL event in the Winter of 2002, with Rambo being named MVP of the event. Winning \$30,000 and establishing themselves as world #1s the team soon found full sponsorship from a host of big name tech companies. Not only would they receive travel expenses but would become the first American Counter-Strike team to be paid full salaries to play Counter-Strike.

The next CPL event in the summer of 2003 saw Rambo and 3D maintain their status as one of the world's elite by placing 3rd, losing narrowly to the event champions and in overtime to the 2nd place finishers. This was still enough to garner them \$28,000 in prize winnings. At the next WCG event Rambo secured his second WCG medal, this time silver, by placing 2nd. This also added another \$20,000 to Rambo's team career winnings. The year 2004 saw 3D find difficulties in replicating their past CPL successes but improve their WCG record by winning the next WCG, taking \$50,000 in prize

money for the accomplishment and the prestigious gold medals which accompany such a win. At the following WCG the feat was repeated and Rambo and his team won another \$50,000 and their second set of gold medals. This also led to them being inducted into the WCG hall of fame, an honour only bestowed upon champions.

2006 saw Rambo add an additional \$65,800 to his team career winnings in the space of 5 events. His team won the EverLAN CS:S tournament and WSVG's LANwar event, placed 4th at the ESWC event in France, came in 2nd at the WSVG finals in New York and the WCG's Pan-Am games. The latter event also had Rambo pick up a WCG silver medal taking his total medal tally to 5.

The end of 2006 saw his tenure in 3D come to a close and Rambo made his decision to join up with the prestigious compLexity organization to play Counter-Strike Source. Before their Source adventure would begin there was just enough time to crush the remaining 1.6 competitors in the US at the PNY finals in early 2007. Being drafted by the Los Angeles franchise of CGS as a member of coL Rambo had once again secured himself the highest salary for a Counter-Strike player in the world and his CS:S team would go on to achieve the best record in the opening season. In the downtime after the end of the first season the team and Rambo won the two big Source LAN events held, namely Digital Life and Newegg LANfest. In december of 2007 at the CGS world finals coL and Rambo won the individual CS Source title to become crowned CGS CS:S world champions. They had set themselves as firm #1s in Source.

LAN Accomplishments:

2000 5th Babbages CPL \$700 (syn) 2001 1st Speakeasy CPL \$10,000 (X3) 2001 1st CPL Invite (X3) - Prototype Intel processors 2001 1st CPL 4-year anniversary event \$1,200 (X3) 2001 2nd CPL Winter \$25,000 (X3) 2002 7th WCG (3D)



2002 3rd WCG Continent vs. Continent (America) -

Bronze medal

2002 1st CPL Winter \$30,000 (3D)

2003 2nd KillerLAN \$1,500 (3D)

2003 3rd CPL Summer \$28,000 (3D)

2003 2nd WCG \$20,000 (3D) - Silver medal

2003 13th CPL Winter \$1,000 (3D)

2004 13th CPL Summer \$1,000 (3D)

2004 1st WCG \$50,000 (3D) - Gold medal

2004 8th CPL Winter \$2,000 (3D)

2005 1st WCG USA qualifier \$5,000 (3D)

2005 1st WCG \$50,000 (3D) - Gold medal

2005 2nd Acon5 qualifier (3D)

2005 1st GGL Americup \$4000 (3D)

2005 1st Digital Life \$10,000(3D)

2005 9th CPL Winter \$900 (3D)

2006 3rd Transatlantic showdown \$5,250(3D)

2006 1st EverLAN CS:S \$10,000 (3D)

2006 1st WSVG LANwar \$12,500 (3D)

2006 4th ESWC \$16,000 (3D)

2006 2nd CGI \$15,000 (3D)

2006 9th WSVG ISC \$2,250 (3D)

2006 2nd Digitallife \$10,000 (3D)

2006 2nd WSVG Finals, NY \$25,000 (3D)

2006 1st WCG USA qualifier \$17,500 (3D)

2006 5th WCG (3D)

2006 2nd WCG Pan-Am \$2,300 (3D) - Silver medal

2007 1st PNY Finals \$2,000 (coL)

2007 1st Digital Life \$10,000 (coL)

2007 1st Newegg LANfest \$5,000 (coL)

2007 1st CGS world finals \$5,000 (coL)

Total team career prize winnings: over \$385,000

Q&A

How did you get involved with TAO-CS and what made you want to be a part of its creation?

Rambo:

"I was first told about TAO-CS about a year ago by steel. He told me him and Thorin had been working on a comprehensive counter-strike guide. Doing over 13,000 minutes of lessons and seeing quality work from previous projects they had worked on, I knew I wanted to be involved."

What were you aiming to achieve in creating TAO-CS and how successful do you think you were to those ends?

Rambo:

"Our main goal in creating TAO-CS was creating a guide that really teaches users in detail how they can improve as an individual. We tried our best to explain those topics in detail with screenshots, videos, and well though out content. I believe we have the most extensive guide ever made."

Who would you recommend TAO-CS for and what will they get out of it?

Rambo:

"This guide is made for anyone who wants to improve their game instantly. You will get a quality guide that is guaranteed to teach you."



Ognian "steel" Gueorguieu

Age: 22

Beginning with online play steel's Counter-Strike career guickly moved into the LAN environment as he attended local LANs in Quebec and made connections. Soon his talent had been noticed by then top Canadian team xeno who had placed 2nd at the Speakeasy CPL event. Playing with his country's top team steel's improving game began to turn heads both in the North American community as a whole and within his team. When it came time to leave the team he and fellow xeno member reek joined up with the French Canadian team LnD (Legends never Die) who attended the Canadian WCG qualifier and promptly won. Their prize had them flying out to Korea to represent Canada in Counter-Strike in the gaming equivalent of the Olympics. Battling through the tournament in Korea the team were sent to the losers' bracket by the German representatives mTw only to produce a remarkable comeback winning two maps in a row to become champions of the first WCG. As well as \$40,000 in team winnings, making steel the first North American CS player to ever win over \$25,000, steel received the gold medal of a champion. Along with his team he was also inducted into the WCG hall of fame, an honour shared by few to this day.

With the WCG behind them and some of the members lacking motivation to go on with Counter-Strike steel found himself needing a new team to compete at the top. By the time the next major event, CPL Summer 2002, came around he had found a starting spot on GX (Gamers-X) who had agreed to pay his travel expenses from Canada to the CPL event in Dallas. At the event GX was to prove a team capable of surprising the com-

petitive community as they notably beat steel's nemeses in mTw with a stirring comeback after being 10-2 down in the first half. From there they went to beat Norwegian dark horses Spacebar on de clan1 mill in a thrilling overtime match in which steel had to summon all of his abilities. in clutch situations. The eventual 7th placing these performances resulted in had steel established as one of the top North American talents, having won the WCG and now upset a number of big name teams. With 3D looking to revamp their roster he was invited to become a full time member and readily accepted.

While his team-mates in 3D headed off to the WCG to repre-



Back home with his American colleagues steel played a pivotal role in their stirring victory at CPL Winter 2002. Along the way he produced a stellar individual performance in the upper bracket finals on de_inferno against eventual 2nd place finishers GoL. When 3D captured the CPL title in the finals steel had set himself apart from every other Counter-Strike player by becoming the first Counter-Strike player to win both a WCG gold medal and a CPL championship title.





When companies stepped forward to sponsor 3D following their win steel also became the only Canadian member of an American sponsored Counter-Strike team, showing the regard to which his own teammates ranked him above all the other talent in the USA. steel's last big placing at a major event came when 3D finished 3rd at CPL Summer 2003. When his career ended in early 2005 steel had captured over \$115,000 in team career prize winnings and 2 WCG medals. He now studies to become a photographer and can be found writing articles about Counter-Strike for ESEA.

2001 1st Polybash CPL qualifier \$2,500 (LnD)

2001 1st WCG Canada qualifier (LnD)

2001 1st WCG \$40,000 (LnD) - Gold medal

2002 1st Dreamcité CPL qualifier \$1,000 (LnD)

2002 7th CPL Summer \$4,000 (GX)

2002 9th WCG (LnD)

2002 3rd WCG Continent vs. Continent (America) -

Bronze medal

2002 1st CPL Winter \$30,000 (3D)

2003 2nd KillerLAN \$1,500 (3D)

2003 3rd CPL Summer \$28,000 (3D)

2003 13th CPL Winter \$1,000 (3D)

2004 13th CPL Summer \$1,000 (3D)

2004 8th CPL Winter \$2,000 (3D)

Total team career prize winnings: over **\$115,000**

Q&A

How did you get involved with TAO-CS and what made you want to be a part of its creation?

steel:

"The idea for TAO-CS was born during a casual conversation Thorin and I had about the learning curve involved in CS and the resources that aspiring players had available to them to shorten this. Bearing in mind I wasn't competitively active in the game at that point, for the most current information on the game we brought Rambo on board to make TAO-CS as complete as possible."

What were you aiming to achieve in creating TAO-CS and how successful do you think you were to those ends?

steel:

"TAO-CS's main goal was to create an exhaustive and comprehensive guide to help up and coming players understand what it means and especially what it takes to reach the top of the Counter-strike competitive circuit."

Who would you recommend TAO-CS for and what will they get out of it?

steel:

"TAO-CS is geared for anyone looking to improve their game that already has a basic knowledge of CS. The wealth of information means that anyone looking to up the ante will learn, from the least experienced competitively to the higher echelons of competitive player."



DUNCAN "THORIN" SHIELDS

Age: 24

After taking up the virtual pen when the only writers whose work he enjoyed retired Thorin quickly established himself as one of Europe most hard-working and unique esports journalists/writers. Beginning with a Russian site which translated his writings into Russian for a sister site he soon moved on to work with esports legend and one of the aforementioned writers, IznO, at the Scandinavian subscription service Gamers.nu. Refining his writing style and developing an entertaining, if at times controversial, persona from which to operate from behind Thorin's writing guickly became regularly referred on community websites the world over. During his time at Gamers.nu he travelled to events in Sweden. Norway, France and the USA to cover events in a time period when no other sites could afford to send journalists out to cover such events. His unique audio content, including interviews before and after matches with the world's premiere players was unlike anything which had preceded it in Counter-Strike and would take many years until the era of streaming broadcasting until it was at all replicated by others.

After his time at Gamers.nu ended when his salary no longer matched his living situation Thorin briefly considered departing the esports world before providing pro bono work for American team 3D's website which he would revamp and redesign. In doing so he further attracted the attentions of 3D manager Torbull who

invited him to join the ESEA company and help them build a North American subscription service similar to that he had been intimately involved with at Gamers. nu. The service was launched and went on to be wildly successful amongst the community. After creating features like Ask ESEA (a successor to the popular Ask HeatoN and Ask element features he had innovated for Gamers. nu) and conducting hundreds of interviews and thousands of CS movie reviews (a feature he had invented in 2002) Thorin took a hiatus from esports and ESEA in



2005. This ended in late 2006 when he came back to ESEA, initially to provide one of his specialities, CS movie reviews, but as 2007 came along eventually to become a writer and journalist again. Thorin currently hosts the ESEA features 'Ask ESEA', 'Master Debater' and writes articles for the European version of the site.

Events attended for coverage purposes:

2001 CPL London, UK (Pro-cybernews) 2002 CPL Summer Dallas, USA (Gamers.nu) 2002 CPL Oslo, Norway (Gamers.nu)



2002 WCG Qualifier Stockholm, Sweden (Gamers.nu)

2002 CPL Winter Dallas, USA (Gamers.nu)

2003 CPL Cannes, France (Gamers.nu)

2003 Clikarena Toulouse, France (Gamers.nu)

2004 CPL Winter Dallas, USA (ESEA)

Q&A

How did you get involved with TAO-CS and what made you want to be a part of its creation?

Thorin:

"The idea of a Counter-Strike guide had always been something present in my mind in the sense that I often think of ways things can be improved or done to the fullest of their potential. When conversation between steel and I had us both agreeing that there were no proper resources out there to get a player from the bottom to the top or intermediate players to the next level or even top players to complete their skill set I knew there was a solution. We brought in Rambo so he could provide up to date information and concepts to ensure TAO-CS was as complete as possible. What made me want to be a part of the creation is that here are two of the best Counter-Strike players to ever pick up a mouse so I knew what I could get from them was going to max out the potential of this project. In my career I haven't taken every opportunity that came along, only those which provided me with full access so the potential of each project could be reached. TAO-CS was no different and it shows in the end product."

What were you aiming to achieve in creating TAO-CS and how successful do you think you were to those ends?

Thorin:

"If we were going to make a Counter-Strike guide then it couldn't be simplistic or a cash-in on steel or Rambo's names, it had to be the most comprehensive guide we could create and take in all aspects of the game, including those players were usually uneasy about giving away to their competitors and future rivals. With both players on board and buying into the philosophy we had set for the project I knew we had an ideal creative unit: steel and Rambo are both masters of different styles of Counter-Strike play which run the gamut and I knew my years of investigative writing and interviewing gave me the skill set to extract everything from these legends of the game and translate it so even the layman could understand and appreciate it. I think this guide far exceeds the requirements for such a project and when people have finished studying it and seeing how their game improves they'll appreciate the kind of effort and creativity that went into making it."

Who would you recommend TAO-CS for and what will they get out of it?

Thorin:

"I'd recommend TAO-CS for anyone who wants to learn more about Counter-Strike and improve their game, which should be everyone. Part of the reason getting to the top competitively isn't easy in Counter-Strike is that many of the concepts and principles governing the play of the best players are hard to decipher, they make them look so effortless and simple. To really understand them you need to be able to get inside those players' heads and then be able to translate what you find back into language and terms you can understand. That's what this guide does and through the different mediums of teaching, from text to video, players are going to find they have the bible of competitive Counter-Strike in front of them and it's just up to them now how much they can and want to learn."

WEAPON BREAKDOWNS: PISTOLS

USP

As the counter-terrorist's default weapon the USP is a cornerstone of CS as everyone must use it on a regular basis. Whether on the pistol round as CT or on save rounds prowess with the USP can greatly increase one's chances of winning a round.

Silencer

The question of whether or not to use the silencer on the USP can be simply answered: don't.

Rambo explains the only time he will use it:

"When I'm in a lurking position and want to get off a few shots without giving up my position. I only aim for the head, and give myself an extra half second between the shots due to the recoil add on of the silencer"

Firing

The USP has 100% accuracy when fired slowly enough. If the right firing speed is achieved then no compensation for recoil is necessary. When spamming the USP (firing it as quickly as possible) the recoil goes upwards similar to a rifle as opposed to the random side to side motion of a deagle.



steel explains his approach:

"Most often in a 1on1 I will not move as I shoot and discharge at a controlled speed and always aim for head because it's 100% accurate the whole clip if you shoot at the right speed"

A commonly misunderstood aspect of the USP is that if two bullets are fired one after the other then for the recoil to recover entirely the time it takes is longer than if those bullets were simply fired with a pause between each one. Recoil when spamming the gun not only adds up but increases as the player fires at a faster rate.

In situations where the player faces multiple opponents he need not necessarily fire single bullets, moving in between. Instead typically he should fire two bullets at least. If the number of enemies engaging him is two then it is advisable to attempt to kill one instead of merely wounding both.

steel adds:

"A lot of this goes into positioning, say you face two guys well you hide one of them behind a wall and engage one at a time"

When to spam

When the player knows the enemy is low then spamming can be the correct technique, also when the player is at mid range facing an enemy with a superior weapon. When an enemy is threatening and the player has no place to get cover spamming is also acceptable. By threatening it is meant that the player will clearly be killed unless he can kill the enemy first.

1v1 and 1v2 situations

The player can often win 1v1 situations with the USP if he takes time with his shots.

steel points out:

"This doesn't apply obviously if you get one shot splashed"

In a 1v2 situation the player should aim to isolate one enemy and eliminate him before having to face the other. Walls and cover can be used to achieve this end.

The USP in the pistol hierarchy

Despite the positive qualities outlined in this section if a player has the opportunity to pick up a deagle as CT without endangering himself then it is advisable. The deagle is a weapon which can kill in a single shot and fire through walls so it is more desirable in such a situation. As a terrorist if buying a pistol to use on a save round it would not usually be a USP when instead a deagle could be purchased. One situation where an exception may be made is if the terrorists have lost the pistol round and they expect the CTs to buy colts with no head armour, in this situation buying USPs could be effective. On the other hand if a USP is on the floor and the player has a glock then provided it does not endanger him he should pick it up. On pistol rounds the USP is a better weapon than the deagle.

Buying armour on pistol rounds as CT

If enough of the player's team-mates have bought defuse kits, one in the proximity of each bomb site at least, and the player's position is frequently naded then buying armour is an acceptable proposition. In most cases though a flash and nade or two flashes is more helpful to the team so the player must weigh up whether his position really requires armour or whether it will prove selfish in regards to the team objectives.



- The USP has 100% accuracy if you fire at the right speed.
- If you spam the recoil will go upwards like a rifle.
- Discharge at the head and at a controlled speed to take advantage of the accuracy of the USP.
- Firing with pauses in between each bullet uses up less time than firing multiple bullets and then waiting for the recoil to return to normal.
- If facing two enemies either try and use cover to fight them one at a time or just aim to kill one instead of wounding both.
- When you are facing an enemy who is low on health or has a better weapon it can be right to spam the USP.
- If you're in immediate danger where you can't retreat and the enemy will kill you spamming can be the only option.
- By taking your time with your shots winning 1v1s with the USP can become a common event.
- The silencer can be used in lurking eco situations.

- The USP is generally better than a deagle on pistol rounds.
- If you expect the CTs to buy colts with no head armour when they win pistol round then buying a USP could be effective.
- The glock can be more suitable in some situations, if you run out of bullets with USP. Or if you know the opponent is close and you want to use burst fire.



GLOCK

As the default terrorist weapon the player must know how to use the glock effectively as he will be forced to use it on save rounds or if his role in a strat on pistol round involves him buying equipment.

Single fire

If the player is standing still and has not fired then single fire can be accurate while firing semi-quickly. If the player is moving then this method of firing is not advisable unless he is very close to the enemy.

Burst fire

When moving around or from close-mid range to close range burst fire mode is the recommended method for using the glock. When bursting it is advisable to aim a little lower than the head so that even if the player misses the head he will be sure of putting bullets into the enemy. The further away the enemy is the lower one should aim while bursting.

steel adds:

"The glock is the kind of weapon with which you want to keep pressing for less distance with because your chances increase at closer ranges."



In situations where the player has an enemy pinned down either 1v1 or 1v2 and the enemy has been rushed or is reloading/trying to get away then a useful technique can be to crouch and use single fire as then the player is assured of killing the enemy.

A common misconception about the glock is that one should be jumping all the time. In fact in most situations jumping is not the ideal method, it should be used when turning a corner blind or rushing in at an opponent. The chief priority of the glock user is to get close enough to potentially kill the enemy and get a gun. As a result the player should always be running towards the enemy unless he is stuck out in the open.

steel also mentions:

"If you have a glock most of the time you want to outnumber a guy because 1v1 you will lose most battles unless you are in their face"

When bursting at close ranges while saving it is advisable to discharge as many shots as possible instead of worrying about placing shots carefully. In this situation the player could be dead at any moment and so bullet preservation is not a high priority.

An interesting side note worth remembering is that as mentioned in the section on ladder movement a glock burst is one of the few methods of firing which has any kind of accuracy while on a ladder. In such a case the accuracy is similar to that of firing a burst while in mid-air.

The glock in the pistol hierarchy

steel sums this matter up succinctly:

"If it means having armor I usually pick having a glock and armor, otherwise it's the bottom of the barrel for me"

Rambo adds:

"My favourite part of the glock is how versatile it is. It allows you to be accurate while moving and jumping and having the single and burst fire options lets me choose the appropriate method depending on the situation."

- Firing semi-quickly while in single fire mode can be somewhat accurate if you are standing still and haven't fired shots already.
- Use burst fire from mid to close range.
- Aim a little lower than the head so if you miss the head you'll still do some damage.
- With a glock you should be trying to close the distance between you and the enemy so you increase your chances.
- When an enemy is pinned down reloading or retreating it can be useful to crouch and fire in single fire mode to guarantee the kill.
- Get your team to outnumber an enemy if you have a glock.
- If you're bursting at close range on a save round just fire as quickly as possible, you don't need to worry about saving bullets.
- Glock bursts can be used while on ladders.
- When extremely close range the player may wish to jump and burst, this way he can still shoot accurately while being the most evasive he can.
- When rushing as a team with glocks jump, burst and stay alive so your team-mates can help you.



DEAGLE (DESERT EAGLE)

The most powerful pistol in Counter-Strike, the deagle can kill with a single shot and fire through objects such as walls. As a result not only is the deagle an often used weapon it is also one which can change the momentum of rounds in the right circumstances.

Firing single shots

When the player moves forwards and strafes in either direction his first shot with the deagle will be 100% accurate to where his crosshair is aiming. As a result when moving around corners this kind of movement is preferable to just running or just strafing. Shooting and moving for more than two shots at a time is not advisable.

steel explains another method of firing while retaining accuracy:

The key with both techniques is keeping a steady shooting speed so the player is firing slowly enough that he does not lose accuracy.

Rambo adds his approach to the deagle:

"I like to use the strafe/stop technique with this weapon. Since I only have 7 shots I'm going to make sure I shoot each bullet with as much accuracy as I'm allowed."



Spamming

Unlike the USP the recoil of the deagle when spammed is unpredictable and so spamming with any degree of accuracy is difficult. Spamming the deagle is only advisable when the player is right in the enemy's face, the enemy has low health or the player is being rushed by multiple opponents.



Where to aim

Aiming at the upper body area is sufficient at long ranges, though if the enemy has armour it may more often be worth aiming for the head.

steel explains his thought process in a specific situation:

"If it's the first round or they are without armour I often try to move around more, since I don't have armour either, and shoot their chest areas"

When it seems like an easy shot aiming for the head is effective, this distinction comes with experience though and is not something which the player should have to apply conscious thought to.

steel explains that point:

"If it seems like a doable headshot then I do it, if not I go the safe route and shoot the chest. It only takes a couple of shots to kill in the upper body so if you make them count instead of spamming you can kill people easier"

The last part of steel's comment is especially applicable to scenarios where the player has low health. Taking his time and making his shots count in the chest area are far likelier to result in a kill than spamming away his remaining bullets with little accuracy involved.

The deagle in the pistol hierarchy

On pistol rounds as terrorist buying a deagle can be a good choice since the weapon allows the player to kill the enemy quickly. Naturally if the player holds either a glock or USP and sees a deagle on the floor and can get to it without endangering himself then he is advised to pick it up.

Still, steel points out his personal preference on the matter as far as pistol round choices go:

"For me armour and trying to pick up a USP is the optimal one"

When to buy it

As counter-terrorist buying a deagle on the pistol round is not advisable. On save rounds as counter-terrorist it is only worthwhile buying a deagle if the rest of the player's team are doing so, in isolation it is a waste of money which should be put towards buying rifles in the next rounds. On save rounds as terrorist the first consideration to be made is how much money the player will have next round if he loses this one. If he will not enough have enough for a rifle then he should resist the temptation to buy a deagle. Likewise if the rest of his team decide to stick with glocks then one player buying a deagle is not likely to make any difference and the decision becomes a waste of money. Due to the potential for one shot kills and occasional crazy rounds which can result from some lucky deagle headshots while saving many players buy the weapon at every possible opportunity, this is not advisable due to the economy based nature of competitive Counter-Strike.

steel explains this point quite directly:

"A 700\$ gamble is hard to swallow if the following round you could have had two flashes and a nade/smoke"



A potential problem solved

As terrorist when the player's team has won the pistol round and he has survived with his deagle he may be tempted to stick with it and simply buy armour. This is not advisable as in that situation he has enough money to buy a rifle, whether it be an AK-47 or a galil, and buying one when the rest of one's team also buy one practically guarantees the round win.

steel elaborates:

"If you have to take on 2 savers with a deagle you'll lose often. 5 guys with cheap rifles can take on any save concoction. If you don't get a rifle you are giving them the chance to kill you"

Some players who feel they are particularly proficient with the AWP may not want to buy a cheap rifle since it means they may not have enough money for their sniper rifle when the 4th round arrives. This is not a genuine concern in reality as by ensuring one's team wins the necessary rounds by using the rifle the likelihood one of the player's team-mates can provide an AWP is quite high. Moreover if the player is really as proficient with the AWP as he believes then his teammates are likely to be more than happy to provide him with one, funds allowing.

- The deagle can kill with one shot and fire through objects like a wall or box.
- If you move forwards and strafe left or right your first shot will be 100% accurate.
- Keep a steady firing speed with the deagle so you are firing slow enough and you will not lose accuracy.
- Don't spam unless you're at extreme close range, the other guy has little health or you're being rushed by more than one enemy.
- At long range it can be enough to aim at the chest of the enemy unless you know he has armour.
- When taking a headshot seems easy go for it, otherwise play it safe and shoot the chest.
- Don't buy the desert eagle as CT in most situations and only buy it on saves as T if other people on your team are doing likewise.
- If losing \$700 means you can't afford a rifle next round don't buy a deagle.
- If you survive the pistol round with a deagle as T immediately buy a cheap rifle.
- Don't keep a deagle on the 2nd and 3rd rounds after winning the pistol with the hopes of buying an AWP. If you're good enough with one your more wealthy team-mates can provide one.



MP5 nauy

Despite being a weapon synonymous with Counter-Strike, even featuring in the game's logo, the mp5 in the modern day competitive game is relegated to being used as a weapon for killing saving enemies on the 2nd or 3rd round of a game where the pistol round has been won. In spite of this much reduced role knowing how, when and where to use the weapon is important since losing such rounds can swing movement to the opponent's favour. Also to die holding one gifts the enemy a weapon to use as opposed to their pistol.

Short range

At short range the most advisable technique for this weapon is to spray and keep on the move. Unlike a number of other weapons in Counter-Strike the mp5 retains a surprising degree of accuracy firing while strafing in comparison to its performance standing still. This fact combined with the nature of its advisable use, against saving enemies, means the best method of use is to get close, keep moving and spray.

As Rambo puts it:

"This gun's recoil is fairly manageable; you only need to drag the crosshair down slightly. Try to get as close as possible and use your spraying. Always aim for the head as body shots suck"



Medium range

The same technique advised for short range applies on a medium range. Where medium range play deviates is that bursting can be used effectively here.

Rambo states the matter plainly:

"Since there is less recoil you can shoot faster between burst intervals. Also longer bursts can be shot. You can also burst while fully running, but it is better with the strafe technique"

Long range

The mp5's effectiveness drops off drastically at long range and the default technique of spraying no longer becomes worthwhile. Instead the player is advised to either tap or switch to a pistol.

steel summarizes the differences between the three ranges:

"Short range: spam and move. Mid range: spam. Long range: get to mid range"

When rushed by saving enemies

steel offers this useful advice for such scenarios:

"If they're close you can crouch and spray but if you're getting rushed by eco guys I try to shorten the range and isolate them. Say like alley on train, I'll get sorta to the side as if I ran away but wait for them to trickle out, not go hide in the corner. Just not the side in plain view of all 5"

When to buy

The default purchasing process for the mp5 for many years was to buy it 2nd round after winning the pistol round as either T or CT. As CT this still applies but as terrorist it is advisable to instead purchase the galil rifle which costs only \$500 more and delivers more damage. As CT it is also important to note that due to the changes to the in-game economy made back in 2004 if a terrorist team manages to plant the bomb on the 1st or 2nd round they may well be able to afford galils or AK-47s and so upgrading to a rifle 3rd round is advisable in such situations.

In situations where it is not within the first 3 rounds of a half and the player is without the necessary money to buy a rifle and armour it is more advisable to buy either a cheaper rifle and armour (i.e the galil/famas) or simply a rifle and no armour since the mp5 performs poorly against enemies with armour.

- · Spray and move at short range.
- The mp5 can still fire somewhat accurately while running or strafing.
- At medium range you can burst the mp5.
- Either tap at long range or switch to your pistol.
- Shorten the range and isolate when being rushed by saving players.
- Buy the mp5 on the 2nd round when your team has won the pistol round.
- If terrorists have planted the bomb it is probably better to buy a rifle on the 3rd round.
- Terrorists who win the pistol round are better suited to buy a galil at a cost of only \$500 more.
- The mp5 is poor against armour so don't buy one mid-game if you can buy a rifle and no armour instead.



GALIL

Priced at \$500 more than an mp5 but \$500 less than an AK-47 the galil stands as a worthwhile replacement for the mp5 but lacks the striking qualities that make the AK-47 one of the best weapons in the game. Nevertheless its usefulness in eliminating saving enemies mean all players should understand how best to use the weapon so terrorist sides are more effective. Like other rifles the first bullet of the galil is accurate. The galil can also shoot through walls.

As Rambo says:

"This gun is really inaccurate, but it's still a rifle."

Spraying

Full auto spraying should only be utilized at close range.

steel explains:

"The galil has peculiar recoil that doesn't simply pull up; it goes side to side randomly like deagle spam."



Bursting

Bursting is the best technique for firing the galil overall. A semi-accurate burst can be fired off as long as bullet output is limited. Bursting in this manner from long range involves firing using the same technique as is used for the colt: a two bullet burst, pulling down slightly on the second bullet.



steel's prowess with this technique is well known and he explains his approach:

"I will shoot two bullets, strafe, stop and shoot two bullets etc. But I will stop my strafe after I shoot to shoot the next two, so as soon as bullet two comes out I am strafing and counter-strafe to stop myself and shoot again."

Regarding bursting Rambo adds:

"You generally only want to shoot 2-3 bullets."

To be as efficient as possible using this technique the player must learn to fire in a specific rhythm so he is shooting as fast as possible but with 100% accuracy from that range.

steel outlines the point:

"Your shooting rhythm controls your strafe distances and stops, not the other way around. Gotta get as many bullets out as possible accurately, always have to make kill the priority."

Tapping

Tapping should only be used at long range and with single bullets at a time.

When to use a galil

As mentioned in the sections on the deagle and mp5 the player is advised than when his team wins the pistol round as terrorist he should buy a galil instead of an mp5 or sticking with a deagle. The gun only costs \$500 more than an mp5 for more damage against armour and in comparison to a deagle is much more likely to result in a round win against saving enemies. When it comes to the 3rd round of such a match and the player has survived the 2nd round he may choose to stick with his galil if he has been particularly successful with it up to that point in killing multiple opponents.

steel adds this caueat:

"If it's a big match I'll get an AK if possible because the AK is consistent (in comparison to the Galil)."

- Only full auto spray at close range.
- Use bursting with the galil, firing two bullets and pulling down slightly on the second.
- Learn to synch your movement and firing so you are firing with the maximum accuracy but also as fast as you can.
- · Tap only at long range and with single bullets.
- Buy a galil second round instead of an mp5 or keeping a deagle.
- On the 3rd round of a match if it is a big game upgrade to the more consistent AK.



FAMAS

Despite being brought in along with the galil to play a similar role as a cheaper rifle for CTs the famas is noticeably different from it's terrorist cousin, even more so than the colt and AK are different. The famas can shoot through walls like other rifles. In the interest of being a rounded player it bears examination by all levels of player.

Rambo sums the weapon up simply:

"Weaker than the galil, but easier to manage. You can switch between the shooting features pretty quickly, so you can burst then auto someone to death or vice-versa."

Automatic

This feature should only be used at close range. Not only is it too difficult to control the recoil by manually spraying but the gun's bullets are weak making headshots the only efficient shots. The weapon also only holds 25 bullets in each clip.



As Rambo says:

"You should only spray at close ranges, anything further and it's god awful"



Burst mode

The weapon's unique quality among rifles is its burst fire mode which is actually quite good. A burst fires three bullets accurately but to make use of this mode the player should be stationary when firing. In light of the gun's requirement of being stationary while firing to gain maximum accuracy it is advisable the player learns how to use the strafe technique of movement to maximise both his accuracy and movement, moving while bursting should not be attempted. The burst should be aimed at the head. Attempting to burst manually is unwise; instead use the burst mode feature. The player should not shoot too fast between each burst or the accuracy of the bursts will decrease.

Regarding whether or not the player should buy this weapon steel's personal preference is as follows:

"I rarely used it because if I could afford it I skipped the armour and got a colt instead. If I couldn't afford a colt/armour then instead of getting a famas and armour I got a colt and no armour or just body armour"

If the player has mastered the burst fire mode of the weapon and feels he can do significant damage in a specific situation with it then he may choose to buy a famas and armour when lacking the funds to get a colt and armour. This is entirely situational and subjective to each particular player as steel's answer shows.

- You can switch between modes quickly so you can burst someone down and then auto spray to kill them or the other way around.
- · Only spray at close range.
- Burst fire mode is good but requires being stood still while firing.
- Learn the strafe technique to get the most out of the burst fire mode.
- · Aim bursts at the head.
- Don't try and manually burst, instead use the burst fire mode.
- Don't fire too fast between bursts.
- Depending on what kind of player you are you may prefer to buy a colt and no armour or simply body armour than a famas.



Colt

The prototypical counter-terrorist weapon the colt costs more than its cousin the AK but comes with the option of silencing its fire. As a mainstay of CT play which seems unlikely to disappear anytime soon it is one of the most important weapons in CS to master.

To silence or not to silence

A topic of debate which has raged throughout the history of competitive CS is whether the colt should be used with the silencer on or off. Both have their own specific qualities which can be beneficial.

As steel puts it:

"The difference is there but is really hard to quantify. Both are pretty good"

Rambo sums up one of the dilemmas of both options:

"There's more recoil with it on and it does less damage. It conceals your position though"

Due to the subjective nature of the choice which the player ends up deciding on may change from game to game and round to round depending on which elements of his game feel more on than others or simply which he feels more confidant in using. Still there are some basic guidelines which can serve as food for thought



on this matter. In situations where the player is going to be spraying multiple opponents, possibly using the entire clip of bullets, then unsilenced seems to be the more efficient choice as the spray is more controllable as opposed to with the silencer on where it veers from left to right more randomly. So if a player is going to be rushed at a position such as catwalk or B on de_dust2 then using the weapon unsilenced may be preferable. Situations in which to use the silencer include when the player is outnumbered, when he is in a concealed position and if he finds it preferable for bursting.



Rambo offers this helpful tip:

"A trick I like to use when putting on the silencer, is as soon as I activate it I switch to my pistol or knife allowing me to move faster while putting the silencer on."

Spraying

Spraying is advisable when the player knows he has an enemy with low health or stunned out in the open. In such situations the player will hit the enemy with the first bullet and then just continue spraying. To spray effectively the player should drag his crosshair down quickly after the first few bullets and then right or left depending on the position of the enemy and the range.

Rambo adds:

"If you're spraying you want to be either crouching or moving left to right. Moving forwards or back makes your recoil insane"

steel brings up some interesting points players should consider:

"Colt spraying is not bad in itself but being a crouched guy not moving usually is, so if you're gonna do it it's a good idea to do it with team-mate cover close or somewhere you can run away to. Shooting more bullets than you have to puts you in danger, when you spray you are committing bullets and if you risk it and lose the risk then is you are stuck reloading or with a small clip. Unless you're really close there's no reason you shouldn't be able to kill a guy with well-placed bullets."



coL vs Pandemic at the PNY finals / Rambo's POV

Tapping

The player should decide how many bullets to tap based on the distance. Angles and situations also factor into his decision. The closer he is the more bullets and the further the fewer bullets. The more accuracy achieved the less bullet output occurs. The player is more vulnerable because he needs to be still to tap. Tapping allows the player to shoot control his recoil at the expense of shooting fewer bullets.



Rambo outlines his tapping approach:

"I use tapping at middle to long ranges. I'll start with a burst and if I stun them I like to crouch and tap them to death."

Tapping is all about timing. The technique involves shooting one bullet at a time, and the slight pauses between each click allows enough recoil time to shoot 8-10 bullets. Crouching allows the player to shoot more obviously. A down side of tapping is that the player must be stationary and isn't shooting full auto. Tapping works best at very long ranges and the medium to long range distances.

Tapping is very useful when the player does not want an enemy to run away, it gives the enemy the least chance of being able to break off from the battle.

steel explains his key to tapping:

"The most important thing for tapping fast and accurate is the speed of your tap has to be completely consistent like clockwork. If you're inconsistent it will become really inaccurate, so your tempo has to be uniform throughout the tap. Usually I can tap about 8-9 bullets max and keep a reasonable accuracy."

There are some circumstances where it is useful to crouch while tapping, for example crouching can gain around 2 bullets more in the tap. It must also be considered though that when a player is standing he is aim-

ing at head level whereas when crouched he is aiming upwards. Crouching also prevents the player from moving right away after firing so there are circumstances where it is inappropriate.

As far as crouching while tapping goes steel adds:

"I usually only do it when I'm in a decent position and I'm not threatened"

Tapping is a useful technique for safety spamming, when the player feels someone will come around a corner tapping it with a silenced colt is a good way of killing the enemy as they come out as the first bullet freezes them and then the rest finish them off. Bursting on the other hand is not good for safety spamming.

Bursting

The basic technique of two bullet bursting is outlined in the galil section.

Rambo adds:

"You can decide how many bullets to shoot in a burst depending on distance, but also angles and situations factor in. Closer more bullets, and further fewer bullets"

Bursting is in the middle of the three firing techniques as it has a faster bullet output than tapping but less accuracy. The player can move and burst but it is best to apply the strafe and stop technique. The fewer bullets fired the less recoil control needed so the player can fire 15 bullets as long as he can control the recoil produced. Whenever bursting the player should aim to be evasive by constantly strafing and pausing only when necessary to get off shots. Understanding the balance between moving and shooting in each situation is vital.



Rambo adds this point:

"You can turn a burst into a full spray when you have them stunned or damaged."

steel adds this extra point on colt technique:

"Often I see players shoot head level and not compensate and even in close situations they will dink a guy and then die because they weren't pulling down after"

When to change weapon

Regardless of whether the player is holding a colt or an AK it can be useful to pickup the enemy's gun when possible. For example as CT picking up an AK may allow the CT to fire without more distracted Ts knowing it is an enemy firing. A terrorist on the other hand can silence a colt and fire without making as much noise as he would normally with his standard AK.

steel throws this in:

"Also it's good to get a gun and spam into walls if you're covered, then get your original gun back, in slow games like on nuke for example"

- Spraying can be easier with the colt unsilenced if you have to spray multiple people and use up a whole clip of ammo.
- The silencer is useful when outnumbered or when hidden.
- You can put the silencer on and switch weapons to speed up the process of attaching the silencer and being able to use it.
- Spray when you know the enemy has low health or is stunned out in the open.
- When spraying drag your crosshair down after the first few bullets and then left or right depending on where the enemy is.
- If you're going to crouch and spray ensure you have a teammate covering you or cover to escape to.
- The amount of bullets you should tap depends on the distance of the enemy; the closer he is the more bullets, the further the fewer.
- · You must be still to tap.
- · Use tapping at mid to long ranges.
- Tapping can be useful to finish someone off after stunning them with a burst.
- Tapping is useful for safety spam if you think someone will come around a corner.
- Use the two bullet burst technique outlined in the galil section.
- Study the balance between moving and shooting to develop the ideal bursting technique.
- You can turn a burst into a full spray when you have them stunned or damaged.
- Make sure you compensate for each bullet after the first to ensure they all go to head height when bursting.
- Picking up the enemy's weapon can be useful in deceiving the enemy in general.



PK-47

One of the cornerstone weapons of Counter-Strike the AWP is the archetypal terrorist weapon and one which all players must master if they seek success. The ability to use the AK effectively makes offensive sides more successful for both the player and his team. Like other rifles the AK can fire through walls.

The AK is the quickest killing automatic weapon in Counter-Strike at close range. As long as the player's bullets are well placed the enemies will die more rapidly than with any other rifle. At middle range, though, the AK's very high recoil and subsequently, long recoil recovery time can prove very costly.

Spraying

The player should aim to get the first two bullets into the enemy's head and then pull down his spray so that the later bullets are recoiling into the chest. Spraying should only be used while the player is crouching or moving left to right. Spraying with the AK requires a lot of recoil management so it should only be used when necessary. An example would be at close range if the player has stunned an opponent or caught him out in the open. The AK can be sprayed at medium range if the player is able to land the first bullets. Spraying at long range is not advised at all.





steel offers this important aduice regarding overspraying:

"The best way to avoid getting into the "spraying trap", spraying too much, is simply to discipline yourself to maximize the efficiency of the AK's power by not wasting its bullets with needless spray. Usually, when outnumbered or being fired at (often both) I have noticed many players have a tendency to spray in situations where exactly the opposite would be paramount. Disciplining yourself to burst or often better, tap the AK can be a milestone to your ability to survive tougher situations."

Tapping

While tapping with the colt is a fairly important technique, with the AK tapping is the most effective technique in a number of situations. This is due to the AK's bullets being more damaging and so the priority should be getting off accurate shots as opposed to more bullets. At mid to long ranges, tapping the AK can not only ensure the player keeps the recoil under control, but also eliminate his enemies in the quickest and most efficient way possible (barring an instant headshot, something even championship level players can't rely on)

It is also useful to aim for the head for the first two bullets, then the upper chest with later taps.

Bursting

Bursting with the AK follows the same basic technique as that of the colt and galil but the crosshair must be dragged down more and faster. The left to right recoil of the AK must also be taken into account. Bursting with the AK is a useful technique for finishing an enemy off.

- The AK is the quickest killing rifle in CS at close range.
- Spraying should usually only be done at close range or if you've stunned an enemy/got him out in the open.
- Discipline yourself so you aren't over-spraying and wasting the potential of the AK's power.
- Tapping is one of the best ways to use the AK, aim for the head with the first bullets and then the chest with later taps.
- Bursting is similar to that of the galil/colt but needs more recoil control. It is a good way to finish someone off.

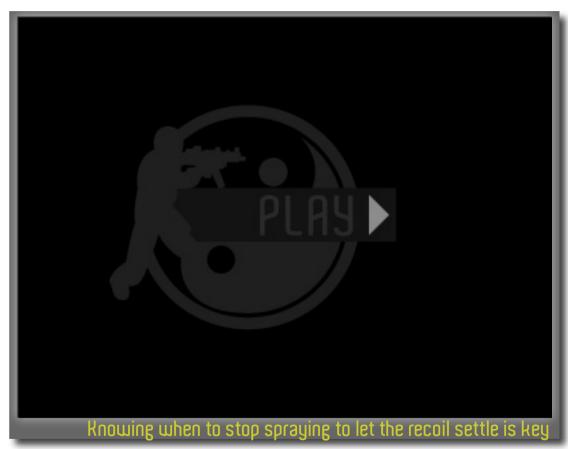


Aug/Sig

Due to their increase price over the AK and colt respectively both of these guns see less action time than their cheaper relatives.

Rambo explains his thoughts on the guns:

"I think these guns aren't as popular as the traditional AK/colt rifles because of two things: their price and damage/recoil difference to the AK and colt. I don't think it's worth it to pay more for a zoom option and decreased bullet damage. If I have a lot of money and/or it's a medium to long range map, or the position I'm holding is medium/long range, I'll consider buying one. When crouched and zoomed, you can shoot the most accurately with the first set of bullets. The recoil seems to kick a lot more vertically then the normal rifles. You have increased movement speed with Aug/ Sigg."



3D vs team9 at the CPL summer 2003 guarter-finals / steel's POV



AMP

As the most powerful weapon in Counter-Strike, delivering more damage per bullet than any other, the AWP is both feared and loved by players depending on their prowess with it. In the hands of a player who understands the weapon's effective firing techniques the AWP can lock down defensive areas, get offensive picks which open up a team's offensive options and turn the momentum of games by eliminating key enemies. In the hands of someone without a good understanding it can be a huge drain on a team's overall economic situation. Despite its deceptively simple one shot one kill potential there are a number of important elements which go into being an effective AWP user.

The different shot types

Flick

To be effective with the flick shot it's important that the player is very comfortable with his sensitivity because it's a technique often used due to circumstance such as when the player has missed a previous shot or has entered an area containing multiple enemies. The flick shot is usually a last resort technique due to it being less consistent than the other types of shot with the AWP.



3D vs SoA at the Transatlantic Showdown event | Rambo's POV

To give himself better odds with a flick shot the player should seek to minimize the flicking distance that will be used. It is best to avoid corners where enemies peek perpendicular to the player's axis, so as to avoid their lateral movement as much as possible (thereby reducing the distance of the flick shot)



Rambo offers some aduice on improving flick shooting:

"A good way of practicing for a flick shot or refining your comfort level with your sensitivity is in an empty server aiming at specific objects in fast succession so as to hit small targets using the technique."

Drag (tracking)

The drag shot is a type of shot which involves the player getting the most out of the amount of time he has available to aim and make sure the shot will hit. This makes the drag shot less of a gamble in regards to whether or not the player will hit the shot, but this comes at the expense of allowing the enemy more time to fire back.

Rambo adds:

"Just as the with flick shot, minimizing the travel distance of your crosshair is an important factor."

Tripwire

This type of shot relies on the fastest reaction time of the shots mentioned. When utilizing this technique the AWP user will barely move his crosshair at all, holding a very tight or small angle (preferably a single entry choke point) The player should position himself so he is holding an angle that affords the enemy the least possible room to move. It is best to avoid angles where

the enemy will come jumping into view or come out pre-firing. Ideally the angle should be such that the enemies come out walking and the AWPer simply has to click fire to kill them.

Quick-scoping (a.k.a. no-scoping)

This type is typically a last resort shot achieved by scoping immediately prior to shooting. This shot will often be performed in desperate situations where the player must shoot to survive. Often mislabelled as no-scoping by observers quick-scoping involves the player zooming and firing in rapid succession so the scope graphic is not displayed. Due to the lack of crosshair on the AWP the player's pistol crosshair can be used to provide a guideline for where the shot will land.

Rambo suggests this method for improving quick-scoping:

"A good way of being aware of the middle of your screen is to use the gun barrel as a guide to the center of the screen. To aid this, you can put a small piece of tape on your screen as a learning tool."

The different scope types

No scope (not to be confused with quick-scoping mentioned above)

As an AWPer when changing or walking to a position it's often advantageous to walk without being scoped at all, not only because the player can move faster but also because it also increases the player's field of view. In certain map situations enemies can appear from two or more places and the player is required to have the maximum amount of peripheral vision. Likewise when peeking positions or areas where enemies can be in multiple spots it is advisable for the player to do so without being scoped and then scope in after seeing the enemies' positions.



Single scope versus double scope

The two main concerns which come into play when using the single or double scope of the AWP are: tracking distance and visual factors.

The single scope requires less tracking distance to pull off a shot and so is inherently quicker in its nature.

The double scope is used most often in a defensive situation due to the enormous amount of effort required to aim and the reduced field of view. Double scoping has a visual advantage in the sense that the enemy's player model is more visible and so the player can see the enemy before the enemy sees him. This is due to the limbs of the model appearing before the center where the enemy's view is based. Double scoping has a reaction advantage as the models are larger and so easier to hit. Due to the reduced field of view when double scoped enemies will move across the screen faster relative to the actual distance they are travelling, so minimizing the use of angles where the enemy has a lot of lateral (perpendicular) movement is advisable.

Offensive and defensive positions

Offense

For the player attacking with an AWP the same peeking principles apply as with other weapons, but some differences can be noted:

When the player is aware of the enemy's position it is preferable to perform a direct peek without jumping, instead concentrating on hitting the enemy before they can hit him. In such a situation the player should apply the opposite strafe technique while peeking the corner with as little travel as possible. That is peeking as little as necessary to see the enemy.

When the enemy's position is unknown to the player he should peek the corner with one of two basic techniques. Either an evasive manoeuvre, anticipating the enemy missing as a result of it and giving the player enough time to land a shot, or inversely a very slow and methodical peek where the player checks each probable position one by one as he slowly turns the corner.

Rambo adds:

"Close-range corner peeks should be avoided by AWPers unless absolutely necessary"

Defense

When defending with the awp the player should choose the angle he is most comfortable with, but make sure it's somewhat long range, and he has cover. He should also make sure enemies can't push up on him without getting challenged with some AWP shots or counter-grenades. It is advised that the player be patient and hold his spot, relying on his reactions to hit the tripwire shots.

steel offers this aduice:

"For the corner distance, as in how far to put the crosshair from the corner, I put it 3/4 of a body width from the corner. That way if they strafe back right away I don't have to move to shoot and it's a good kind of distance if you have decent reflexes"



Travelling with the AWP

Having the AWP out slows the player down considerably, especially when he is crouched or scoped. As a result it is best to minimize the time spent travelling by instead taking out one's pistol. The AWPer's main concern is typically holding angles so the amount of time spent travelling between positions should be minimized as much as possible.

When to buy it (and when not to)

The factors which should be considered by the player when deciding whether to buy an AWP or not come down to the following:

- How much the player's team needs an AWP (for example if a team already has AWPers), his role in the team and the strategy being implemented (so fast playing teams have less need of AWPers for example)
- The player's personal and team money situation. If a player can purchase a rifle for himself and a team-mate or a single AWP for himself then the former is clearly the better decision.
- As CT when holding a long range angle/position the AWP can allow the player to close off a certain part of the map or a corridor, giving himself the advantage due to the distance between the enemy and him.



Rambo adds a side note to consider:

"Some notable AWPers prefer to avoid buying the AWP on 4th round as CT after having won the pistol so as not to be completely out of sync with the rest of the team's money situation in case they lose it."

Specific situations

The following examples should be considered guidelines.

AWP versus AWP

The AWP that is holding the angle (defending) is usually the one with the advantage, especially in cases where the offensive AWPer is unaware of the player's exact position. With that in mind when playing the role of the offensive AWPer the player should aim to take control of the situation by displacing the defending AWPer with grenades or causing him to miss (using evasive manoeuvres) and be forced to give up his position before attempting another shot.

For more information on angles refer to the angles section of this guide.

AWP versus rifle

The main things to keep in mind when engaging a rifler with an AWP is to increase the distance the battle takes place over as much as possible while at the time same ensuring cover is nearby so as to allow the player another shot should he miss the first.

AWP versus saving enemies or multiple targets

Just as with the case of facing a rifler distance is the player's friend in this scenario. It is also important to hold an angle that forces enemies to run towards the player instead of past his field of view.

Rambo adds:

"This allows you to get off more shots and in turn has the effect of keeping the enemies in a concentrated area, not allowing them to overrun your position and spread out."

Summary:

- You need to be very comfortable with your sensitivity for flick shots as they are often a last resort.
- Drag shots involve making the most of the time you have to make sure you hit the enemy, this allows him longer to hit you also though.
- Tripwire shots involve holding an angle and barely moving, instead using your reflexes to kill the enemy when he steps through your crosshair.
- Try and hold tripwire shots on angles where the enemy won't come out jumping or pre-firing.
- Quick-scoping is done by zooming then firing one after the other, it's often a last resort for when you have to shoot to survive.
- When walking or changing position it's best to do it unscoped so you have maximum field of view and can see enemies' positions.
- Your two biggest concerns in deciding which of the two scopes to use are tracking distance and visual factors.



- Single scope is quicker since there's less tracking distance.
- Double scope gives you a visual advantage since you can see limbs of an enemy before he can see you.
- Double scope is most often used in defensive positions due to the effort it takes to aim.
- When you double scope the models are bigger and so easier to hit
- Try to avoid angles where the enemy has a lot of lateral movement when double scoping.
- When you know the enemy's position it's best to perform a direct peek instead of jumping, concentrate on hitting him before he can hit you. Use the opposite strafe technique.
- When you don't know the enemy's position either perform an evasive manoeuvre like jumping or check each place he might be slowly as you turn the corner.
- Avoid close-range corner peeking unless you have to.
- Pick an angle you're comfortable with when you're defending with an AWP and have cover nearby.
- If you're travelling around or changing position don't have your AWP out since it will slow you down, instead have your pistol out.

- When you're weighing up whether to get an AWP or not consider you and your team's money situation, what your role in the team is and what the strategy called is. Also think about whether the spot you're playing calls for it.
- The AWPer holding the angle has the advantage when the attacking AWPer doesn't know his exact position.
- When you're the attacking AWPer use evasive manoeuvres or grenades to try and displace the defending AWPer so he has to move.
- When you're versus a rifler increase the distance you fight over and make sure you have cover you can get behind.
- Against saving enemies or multiple targets hold an angle that forces them to run towards you instead of past your view.

GEAR

Counter-Strike is an economy driven game so the choices a player makes in what to purchase will affect his options in how to play that round. Flashbangs, he_grenades, smoke grenades and defuse kits all can aid the player in winning a round or conflict so his decisions on which to buy and in what situations he prioritizes one over the other play a role in him maximising the potential of his play.

Think when buying

It's important to keep in mind which grenades are required for the player's specific role in each strategy. If his job is flashing an area twice then flashbangs should be prioritized in his buying order. Likewise if the strat requires him to smoke he should place that item at a premium in his buying process. As CT sometimes the player may need a flashbang or smoke to stop a rush or get into his favourite position. If the player notices his team-mates have with no kits then buying one and informing his team of it is advisable.

Rambo outlines his preferred buying process as Counter-Terrorist:

"I usually buy a nade first, then flashes, a kit and then smoke"

Listen to the explosion

An underestimated element of grenade usage is using them to detect an enemy's location. The sound when a grenade explodes and damages an enemy is different to when it explodes without doing any damage and this subtle difference must be learned and then applied to one's usage.

steel puts it like so:

"If people are in a position, the sound that is made when people take damage from a nade should be clearly discernable. If it isn't then you have to raise your volume or adjust your settings to make it identifiable easily as it's an important aspect of using grenades."

Grenades can be thrown over certain walls on some maps so the explosion can be heard if someone behind one is hit. Some common examples are at B halls on de_dust2, above the short ladder at whitewalls on de_train and the halls area of de_inferno.

Grenades in counter-strike carry all of a player's momentum. This means that a player throwing a grenade while running forwards will have a much longer throw distance, and one running in reverse will see his throw carry the rear-moving momentum to the point that the grenade is barely thrown. Grenades react in a similar manner when the player jumps up or drops down. This can be used to throw grenades above or below obstacles while letting them traverse a greater distance.

steel offers an example:

"Jumping up and while you are falling from your jump, throwing a nade below one of the trains on de_train. This is particularly important to know not only for throwing further, but also shorter. Some flashing spots require a smaller bounce than the regular nade, so moving backwards while throwing a nade can act to lessen the distance it will bounce."

When strafing side to side the player will notice grenades carry the sideways momentum and in order to throw a grenade straight ahead the player needs to compensate by turning his view in the opposite direction while throwing.

Smaller than they look

It is important to note that the actual size of grenades is much smaller than the model shown on screen. As a result they can be thrown through even the smallest crack in a doorway or wall if the player is precise enough.

Auto-priming flashbangs

Rambo explains it simply enough:

"If you want to throw 2 flashes back to back as fast as possible, as soon as you throw the first flash just hold down mouse1 after and it will auto-prime the second"

Learn the defuse times

Knowing the approximate time it takes to defuse with or without a kit will save the player from unnecessarily exploding in situations where he can't defuse and also from attempting to win impossible scenarios where even if he eliminates the enemy he can't defuse in time. The approximate times to use as a guideline are:

With a kit: ~5 seconds Without a kit: ~10 seconds

Summary:

- Buy equipment according to how important it is to your role in the upcoming round.
- Listen for sound differences when a grenade explodes so you know if it hurt someone.
- You can throw grenades over some walls and hear them hurting people on the other side.
- The grenades are smaller than they look on screen so if you aim properly you can fit them through small gaps.
- To auto-prime your second flash keep mouse1 held immediately after throwing the first flash.
- Defusing with a kit takes 5 seconds and without takes 10 seconds, memorize these approximations.

Gun running/dropping

To throw a gun as far as possible the player looks down, jumps and presses the key to drop his weapon at the peak of the jump. This can be used to save time in spawn when providing team-mates with weapons or to throw the bomb across a large gap. Gun dropping and running can also be used to hide extra weapons, for example when upgrading from mp5s to rifles, so that the opposition cannot pick them up and turn a save round into a victory. In such cases throwing such weapons behind boxes where they cannot be accessed or hiding them in dark corners is most desirable. It is also worth noting that the bomb can be thrown in situations where that is beneficial, for example across the gap at long A to A on dust2 where enemies may be covering and a team-mate may have already gotten across.

Introduction to movement

Movement dictates which shots the player can or can't take, as such it is a huge factor in how successful a Counter-Strike player one becomes. This area of the game should not be neglected or overlooked as some have had the tendency to do at the cost of becoming a less rounded player.

Rambo says of movement:

"Movement is the art of aggressing and evading with your feet. Try to get a keyboard that has fast response time and allows you to hold multiple keys at one time.

A good way to practice general movement is to just go in a server by yourself and practice moving around. Practice peeking angles with just your movement keys and navigating areas of the map. Movement requires just as much reaction speed as aiming does. When moving, aiming becomes more unpredictable so timing your shots with your movement is something that should be practiced. Some prefer the arrow keys while the majority use WASD."



3D vs Gamers.nu at the CPL Summer 2004 event

THE CROUCH

Crouch tapping

Not to be confused with the use of a similar technique applied to effectively peeking around corners the crouch tapping mentioned here is purely that of tapping the crouch button in quick succession so that as opposed to the player model simply going down and crouching it quickly springs up in a kind of miniature jump. This technique is most often employed in this sense around boxes which stand at head height to the player model obscuring the enemy from seeing the top of the player's head. Quickly tapping the crouch key in this situation allows the player not only to peek over the top of the box without being exposed for long enough for most opponents to kill him but also enables quick wall shooting in response to the opponent's position or escape from oncoming grenades or flashes.

A vast number of boxes in Counter-Strike are just above head level so the player can use crouch tapping in a number of situations. For example: a lot of the boxes in de_dust2 (such as the green ones in the A bombsite) and in de_inferno (the one in the furthest corner of the B bombsite)

Crouching

Crouching is less a technique and more a case of understanding the optimum principles of play in different situations. While initially seeming to be an obvious aspect of play a quick look at a variety of players' games from all levels of competitive Counter-Strike will display to even the layman different uses of crouching throughout the many scenarios players face. Understanding when to crouch and why is vital to ensuring the right kind of firing technique is employed effectively and shots are able to be dodged. Think of crouching as the foundation point of a number of other techniques which affect the outcome of fire fights and enemy engagement.

Firstly the player should consider the situations in which crouching is preferable. When moving through the air the player should try to be crouched so he is a smaller target for opponents, releasing crouch to extend his legs when approaching the ground. While covering certain choke point areas as counter-terrorist it can be preferable to crouch if the player is likely to engage multiple opponents at the same time with great frequency, here crouching allows more effective spraying and moving around is unlikely to increase the player's chances of doing more damage or killing more opponents. There are occasions where a player is strafing out of an area or reloading on the pistol round while engaged with the enemy where a good evasive manoeuvre can be to strafe jump away crouching while keeping aim tracked on the enemy. This not only makes the

player a smaller target but also a more difficult one to hit as he is moving side to side and up and down. It also uses up time for reloading to complete so the player can resume attacking where another line of action may have led to the player's death in most cases.

Rambo adds:

"I like to crouch in my sweet spots. I'm relying on getting a headshot with at least the first burst/spray and the recoil is more manageable this way."

Inversely in the scenario described above where a player will encounter multiple opponents crouching is not the ideal route in all cases so a tactical decision must be made by the player, usually depending on whether or not he feels he needs to crouch in order to kill his opponents. In the scenario of facing multiple opponents crouching commits a player to making the kills in question since escaping or retreating is not only more difficult but highly unlikely over the long term. A simple case where this is worth considering is when a player's position is likely to be attacked by five terrorists holding glocks, it is generally overly ambitious to assume the player can kill all five without succumbing to their attack and giving up his weapon. Instead remaining standing allows the player to kill some and then retreat either to engage the rest from another position or to allow for backup to arrive providing assistance. It is also worth pointing out for consideration that when crouching headshots become more difficult since the player is looking/aiming upwards as opposed to the standard head-height level all players are accustomed to from moving around while standing.

steel sums up the key decision facing the player as follows:

"Think of it this way: whenever you are not crouched you have the option of dodging/strafing. When you crouch you commit yourself to a position and an outcome of a gun battle, so if it a difficult position to outright win the battle crouching will lower your chances of being able to escape if you've failed to kill your enemy/if there's another one after you kill the first"

Summary:

- The decisions made regarding when and why to crouch affect the techniques which follow, as a result care and thought need to go into these decisions and their long term consequences in multiple instances of the same scenario.
- Crouching commits the player to a particular fire fight or the outcome of an engagement with little chance of retreat so this must always be factored into the decision of whether to crouch or not.

When to crouch:

While moving through the air crouching is preferable to provide the opponent with a smaller target to aim at, the crouch can be released shortly before landing so the player's legs extend to

meet the ground.

- When covering choke points where the majority of the time the player will engage multiple opponents at once and the best course of action is determined to be relying on the position selected and getting as much damage as possible done then and there.
- To distract an opponent as an evasive measure while moving out of an area of waiting for a reload to finish on a pistol round.

When not to crouch:

 When crouching is not deemed necessarily to kill multiple approaching opponents and instead strafing/retreating after the initial kills provides a better long term chance of success. For example when being rushed by five terrorists holding glocks.

Dodging

Dodging is another aspect of a player's overall game which is often ignored and expected to be obvious. In reality the player's natural reactions to situations which result in the ways he chooses to dodge and why may not be based on sound criteria or for the right reasons. In faster paced FPS games like Quake or Unreal Tournament a higher premium is placed upon a player's ability to dodge successfully and effectively, perhaps because these games have their competitive roots in one on one modes of combat. In Counter-Strike dodging still vitally affects scenarios where poor choices in how to dodge result in easy and frequent kills for the opponent each time such a situation arises.

The jump stop

As its name implies this method of dodging involves stopping dead in the air while jumping as opposed to following through on the standard jump trajectory the player is placed on once a jump has been initiated. This is done by hitting the opposite strafe key to the direction the player is jumping in, resulting in the player instantly stopping and falling vertically to the ground. This technique both helps avoid being shot by opponents and as a bi-product of that allows an attacking player an opportunity to get the first high percentage shot on the opponent. A typical example of this technique is in AWPer versus AWPer battles. The attacking AWPer will use the jump stop method so that his opponent continues to track him through the air to make the shot and so when the player stops instantly and drops



3D vs RDW at the CPL Summer2003 event / steel's POV

to the ground the time it takes the AWPer to correct the position of his crosshair allows the player to get off a shot on the opponent.

When the player knows an AWPer is watching a corner he will perform this move at the corner, not too far from it, as that way the AWPer will lead the shot too much and the player has the best chance of hitting the enemy. This also minimizes the air-time for which the enemy can see the player.

Out of bullets

When a player runs out of bullets and is forced to dodge his opponent's attacks while he reloads the simplest and most effective form of dodging is to retreat behind an obstacle like a wall. Many situations in Counter-Strike come down to being able to move behind walls at the right times so this should be considered firstly when attacking or picking a position of defence so that the subsequent decisions to be made when retreating or dodging can include moving behind cover.

Upon an opponent AWPer missing his first shot

In this scenario much depends upon the player's position relative to other parts of the map. If out in the open it is advisable for the player to zigzag if there is no time to retreat behind a wall. If the AWPer in question has retreated behind cover himself then a good route of action can be to immediately fire at the wall with a rifle using the tapping method of shooting, thus making it more difficult for the AWPer to re-emerge from that corner/area and attempt another shot.

Regarding the first scenario steel says:

"In that situation you don't jump away because that's an easy shot. I'd zigzag if I'm in the open though it depends if he has time to reload before I get behind a wall"

Movement awareness

The edge which will play to one players' favour in each encounter where dodging is involved is each player's ability to jump smoothly, as far as possible and his understanding of the limits of movement possible within Counter-Strike. Knowing what is and isn't possible not only allows the dodger to know what he can attempt and with what kind of rate of success but also what his opponent can do and as a result how to potentially counter it.

Rambo offers his approach to dodging:

"A formula I like to use when dodging is the 1-3-1-1 step strafe technique. Meaning: 1 left, 3 rights, 1 left and 1 right. Or starting with right to left. Just try to out manoeuvre the opponent one step ahead, be random and unpredictable."

Summary:

- The jump stop technique involves pressing the opposite strafe button as the direction the player is jumping in to stop momentum instantly. You only need to press the button for a short while and release it before you hit the ground so you are as motionless as possible (so as not to affect accuracy)
- The most effective end to most scenarios requiring dodging will be the player making his way behind a wall.
- If caught out in the open upon an AWPer missing his first shot the player should attempt to zigzag if he cannot make it to cover like a wall.
- When an AWPer misses his first shot and retreats behind cover using the tapping firing method with a rifle can prevent him reemerging or increase the difficulty of his next shot.
- Knowing what can and can't be done in the spectrum of movements available allows you to not only pick the correct course of action for yourself but anticipate your opponent's range of actions.
 This comes with experiences as the player plays more and more.

LADDER MOVEMENT

A number of the maps used in competitive Counter-Strike contain ladders of differing lengths. Understanding the changes that player physics and firing undergo when touching or navigating a ladder is essential to maximising situations involving them or when opponents are involved with them.

Coming into the immediate proximity of a ladder the player will find himself attached to it, thus any momentum built up beforehand is negated whether that be from falling, strafing or jumping. Upon making contact with the ladder if no additional keys are pressed the player will find himself immobilized. The only way for a player to detach himself from a ladder is either to go to the top/bottom of it or to jump to the side and fall off it.

Understanding these concepts allows for a number of techniques to be employed which can be beneficial to the player's game and indeed provide advantages in certain situations.

Ladder sliding

The typical example where this technique is employed is the ladder on the popdog train outside on de_train upon exiting the short ladder room. The player uses the ladder to propel himself off it and to the area behind the electric box. Performing this move correctly and effort-



lessly may require some practice on the player's part as well as understanding how it is made possible. The basic concept involves using the speed the player can get going up a ladder but in a sideways direction.

steel explains how this is done:

"To do this, the player needs to look towards the ladder and strafe in the direction he wants to slide off to, or alternatively look in that direction and move forward. Detaching from the ladder is done purely by the speed you get on the ladder itself, so the jump key is unnecessary to get off the ladder's surface"

More advanced players can combine forward movement with strafing to gain extra speed. The key is understanding that if the player is going to use forwards movement he must be looking at a horizontal level so as not to ascend or descend the ladder while performing the manoeuvre.

Leaving the top of a ladder

A method unknown to some even within the competitive community is that of being able to move up a ladder and onto the area at the top of it without the floating motion usually associated with such a move. To avoid that motion the player should hold crouch before reaching the peak of the ladder and let go upon reaching the top and move forwards.

Moving silently

To move up or down a ladder without making noise which opponents can detect simply move onto the ladder at a position not at the extreme top or bottom and hold crouch while ascending or descending. The player's movement will be slower but without noise.

Maximum speed

The quickest way to move up a ladder is to be at 90 degrees horizontally to it and look straight up while hitting the strafe key towards the ladder as well as the forwards key.

As steel says:

"You'll gain massive speed going up or down if you do this"

How ladders affect combat

It is important that the player remembers at all times that while attached to a ladder his weapons possess the same firing properties as if he is in the air and so there is minimal accuracy available with most weapons. While this makes the firing of weapons while on a ladder mostly a pointless decision the exception is that of glock bursts. A glock burst fired while on a ladder has similar accuracy to one fired while the player is in mid-air.

Miscellaneous

In line with the explanation of the effect of touching a ladder on momentum up until that point a ladder can be used to break a fall, regardless of the height involved if the player can attach himself to a ladder before hitting the ground he will not lose any health.

Summary:

- Any momentum built up before touching a ladder is negated if the player presses no additional buttons. As a result a ladder can be used to break a fall of any height.
- Players can slide off ladders to the side with varying degrees of speed.
- Holding crouch before reaching the peak of the ladder and then releasing at the peak and moving forwards allows the player to avoid floating upon leaving the top of a ladder.
- By holding crouch a player can move silently up and down a ladder though at a slower speed.
- To gain maximum speed up a ladder the player must attach himself perpendicular to the ladder and look upwards while hitting strafe towards the ladder and moving forwards.

- While attached to a ladder all weapons retain the properties of mid-air combat.
- A glock burst can be fired with relatively good accuracy while on a ladder. Just as with air movement that only applies to two bursts, three at most.

Strafe Jumping

Strafe jumping is an important element of movement that deserves to be learnt, there are a number of situations which arise where being able to jump as far as possible with each jump is of benefit to the player. One such scenario may be to escape enemy fire, as when one crosses towards the ramp at the top of long A on de_dust2 knowing the enemy are watching that area. It can be useful for getting to otherwise difficult places to reach such as a lower rafter on de_nuke or the high rock area outside on the same map.

steel explains the technique of strafe jumping as follows:

"Jump and as soon as you are in the air hold a strafe key and fluidly turn in the same direction as the strafe key you are holding. As you close the circle of your jump you gain speed so you want to start turning slowly and into a faster turn in sort of a centrifugal effect"

As the player improves his technique of strafe jumping he will be able to gain greater speed from the outset of the turn of his jump and continue faster in the air.



While the roof to rock area strafe jump may be one of the most famous examples of this technique in action it is not recommended as the first practice point for the beginner. Instead a useful way to practice and at the same time build up an understanding of the underlying physics which affect the player in the air is to perform the strafe jump when moving around a corner which is at 90 degrees to the player. For example when terrorists rush towards the ramp room on de_nuke there is a sharp corner to the player's right as he enters the ramp room where counter-terrorists often hide, a good way to immediately check this corner along with the entire ramp room area quickly and efficiently is to perform a strafe jump where the player moves through 180 degrees and lands facing the corner in question.

Performing multiple strafe jumps can be quite difficult in light of the changes implemented in the physics as Counter-Strike versions have progressed. For this reason if the player wishes to master consistent strafe jumping it is suggested he binds jump to a direction on his mouse wheel, this allows a more fluid and easily visualised approach to multiple strafe jumps.

Rambo had this to say on the matter:

"Strafe jumping is basically just all timing"

Summary:

- Jump, hold a strafe key while in the air and fluidly but not too quickly turn in the direction of the held strafe key.
- Gradually increase the speed of the turn as you close the circle of your jump.
- Consider binding jump to up or down on your mouse wheel to enable a more consistent approach to strafe jumping.

PEEKING

By peeking what is meant is any situation where the player must come out from around a corner or object and he does not know for certain where the enemy will be and as a result must take precautions as opposed to simply moving out without any regard. The more refined a player's ability to peek the more often he will survive such situations so it is an important area of any level of player's game.

Crouch peeking

There are two ways of crouch peeking. One way is the player either uses mousewheel up/down to crouch or simply taps crouch with a keyboard button (ctrl by default) Strafing out while crouching makes the player a more difficult target to headshot while still maintaining mobility. This is a popular way to get out and fight while the player is making himself harder to hit. It is best employed in long or medium range situations, though it can also work in short range situations making it a versatile way of peeking. In some tournaments/leagues this method is illegal so the player is advised to know the rules governing the match he is playing before attempting it. A disadvantage is that the player typically has to commit himself after strafing out and is in the open.



steel adds in the context of rifle uersus rifle situations:

"It provides a good footing for firing back since you're crouched so if the guy watching where you peek isn't then you have an inherent advantage in that sense since you come out and crouch almost immediately. It's a good option if you are confident in your ability to outshoot the opponent but you commit to winning that battle or being dead basically. Crouch peeking also means if you peek and two enemies are looking at you you're in real trouble, so you're committing to a 1v1 battle you hope to win."

The other way of crouch peeking is crawling out crouched. The disadvantage of this way is if the player's opponent is using an AWP or is very attentive to the corner they will see the player's elbow before he is able to see him (due to the player's view being located in the middle of his model)

Rambo continues:

"It's good when you have really good reaction speed, and have good aim. The advantages are you are in place and ready to shoot when you are peeking. People aim higher when they are holding angles, so when crouching their aim usually won't be ready to headshot you."

This tactic is useful when the player knows the location of the enemy since he can shoot more bullets more accurately while crouched. This also means he needs to finish the enemy off with the first peek. Preferably this tactic should be used further from the corner to counteract the earlier problem of players who are attentive in watching corners.

Running out to peek

This method can be good to simply get out and fight, the player has no fear and simply wishes to immediately engage in battle. He is relying on the enemy to miss the first shot and also on out-aiming the enemy. This is also a fast way to clear an angle and it's much harder to hit a moving target than one which is slowly peeking. When using this method the player should peek close up so he is not simply running out and giving the enemy notice he is there.

steel explains when this method is preferred:

"The run peek is preferred when you need to get to a farther area after the peek to let your team-mates out etc, so you can get out and get behind cover to throw flashes to cover their entry for example. Usually it's a gamble though as it's what people expect and are ready for most. The run peek is less of a potential commitment than the crouch peek though since you can retain a certain amount of speed momentum and possibly escape if you miss your shot and so does your opponent, who will most likely have involved backup at this point."

The player should almost always use the run peek when it is a very close range fight, such as on the catwalk on de_dust2. Here he just runs out to peek it and clear the angle. If a team-mate is with the player then he should run out or jump out since it gives his team-mate a chance to get out with him. Against AWPers running out offers the advantage that should the AWPer miss the

initial shot then the player is in good position to hit as the AWPer reloads/runs away or to push on and get a better position. On pistol rounds Rambo likes to run out to clear angles as moving and shooting is effective with pistols.

Elbow peek/pre-firing

Rambo explains:

"I'll elbow/pre-fire peek at popular angles and against certain positions where I anticipate people to be. The stop strafe technique is required here."

The correct way to pre-fire peek is for the player to strafe out as much as he needs to in order to see the angle or spot, then as soon as that is done to tap the opposite strafe key and shoot at the same time. This will allow the player a guick and accurate burst while only exposing him for a half a second or however long he wants to shoot. This is a good way of drawing an enemy out while giving the player a chance to hurt or kill the enemy. The player can also escape easily if he should want to and is the least vulnerable with this peek. This way is preferred when the enemy knows the player is in that area and it's good with all angles. It is best with long range though, and against rifles as opposed to AWPs. This method is also useful with low health. Typically the player should aim to start his first quick peek when he anticipates the enemy is there and reveal his location only when necessary.

Rambo adds:

"It's also really good when you have someone trapped in the open, you can quick peek back and forth until he is finished."

Jump peeking

This method is good when the player wants to reveal an angle and make the enemy miss a shot. It must be kept in mind that the player is vulnerable when in mid-air and is unable to shoot. This method is best used when the player has a team-mate next to him who will peek after the player jumps. The player is sacrificing himself for a second or two to expose an enemy so his team-mate can kill the enemy.

steel continues:

"This method can be used when you have lesser confidence in out-shooting your opponent in the situation you find yourself in. Since he has a higher chance of missing you as you peek due to you being in the air, you get an extra half second to analyze his position and get proper aim on him if he misses. So assuming the opponent missed you initially your odds are somewhat improved."

This is also a good way of peeking against AWPs and while holding an AWP. Also on save rounds when the player's team is rushing an area jump peeking gives the player's team-mates a chance to get out with him.

Summary:

- Crouch peek using mousewheel/a keyboard button or crawling out crouched.
- Strafing out while crouched makes you a more difficult target to headshot.
- You are out in the open and committed after crouch peeking so you must kill or be killed sometimes.
- Crouch peeking is good when you know where the enemy is since you can shoot more bullets and more accurately while crouched to kill him.
- Running peeks are good when you want to get on with it and have confidence in out-shooting the other guy.
- A running peek can also be useful in getting out fast so your teammate can get out too.

- Running peeks against AWPers can work since if the AWPer misses the shot then the player can get good position or kill the AWPer while he is reloading/running away.
- To elbow fire/pre-fire peek strafe out until you can see the angle, hit opposite strafe and fire.
- Elbow fire/pre-fire peek lets you fire a quick accurate burst and makes you less vulnerable than other peeks.
- Jump peeking is a good way of getting out so your teammates can follow and also to get an AWPer to miss a shot.

MOUSE

There are several factors to be considered in choosing a mouse:

- Comfort level How well can the player grip the mouse? Does it get slippery or wet when the player is sweaty? The mouse needs to fit in the player's hand comfortably when he is both stationary and moving. Mice that are too big or too small will prove difficult to control in the long run. It's also important that the player can find a comfortable grip with a specific mouse, if he can't then he will be continually changing grips and this will adversely affect his control over his sensitivity.
- Tracking ability The player needs to ensure the optical/laser component of his mouse can flick or track fast enough to keep up with his movements.
- Mouse feet The player should check the feet of his mouse are satisfactory for gaming, if they are not he may need to look into purchasing mouse skates if he decides to use that mouse.
- Compatibility The mouse a player uses must be compatible with his mousepad, certain mice cannot track on certain surfaces.
- Wire length There needs to be enough that the player's movements are not inhibited or hampered.







Rambo illustrates three different mouse grips

As of the time of writing the following mice are recommended by the authors:

- Logitech: mx518, mx300*
- Microsoft: IE 3.0, 1.1

*Due to the difficulty in locating mx300s in this day and age the Logitech G1 can be considered as an alternative as it possesses the same mouse shell, though cannot be over-clocked to the same degree of performance with the hertz tweak.

steel explains his reasons for preferring the two mice he used during his professional career, the Logitech pilot ball and mx300 (which both share the same shell):

"The best part is they are light and don't take much inertia to move but at the same time your pinky and thumb stay on the pad so that gives you more control. The feet on them are perfect once worn in a little and stay good for a very long time so you don't need skates or tape."

Regarding aduice for other players he says:

"I think it's fair to say any mouse can be comfortable to anyone, so as long as vou find one where vou are never aching and can get a solid grip it's good. The ergonomic ones can be good for some people but often force you to readjust your mousing position (fingers mostly) to adapt to its shape and that can lead to aching or not being comfortable. It's important to find a mouse shape your hand feels natural in and you don't have to readjust it by thinking about it constantly or periodically so when you put your hand on it it's second nature how your hand fits. I've seen lots of players take their hand off the mice and put them back on a certain way because they find it's better but that seems to me like it's not the best setup; the mouse should fit your hand and not the other way around"

DPI

A value often used in the marketing of newer mice is the DPI (Dots Per Inch) the optical/laser element of the mouse operates at. Despite seeming counter-intuitive it is not simply a case of higher being better and therefore more desirable in all cases. Beyond a certain level there will be no discernable difference in DPI for most sensitivity values in-game. The players most in need of high DPI values are those who use very high in-game sensitivities, in a game such as Counter-Strike it is quite rare to find such an individual. As long as a mouse operates at 400 or 800 DPI it is likely to work fine for the large majority of sensitivities and setups of players.

Mousepad/surface

Rambo uses a steelseries QCK+ heavy and offers this explanation of his view on mousepads/surfaces:

"What I have observed from seeing many professionals' mousepad and gameplay style and from personal experience is that hard pads are used by arm/elbow players, meaning they don't use much flick aiming but more drag and small flicks. Cloth pad users use more of their wrist and fingers, using fast flick and swiping motions. All in all use what you're comfortable with."

During his career steel used in chronological order: a funcpad, steelpad 4D and steelpad S&S. He explains his reasons for preferring hard plastic pads like the S&S and his views on different kinds of pads:

"I've tried most kinds and I find textured plastic surfaces to work best. Firstly because your hands sweating and moisture don't make you slow down and they are also easy to clean as opposed to some of the cloth pads. I've found that textured plastic surfaces are smoothest when slightly worn down but beyond that many pads will become too smooth and have no texture in the

areas where your mouse travels most. The best in that respect I've found are the steelpad S&S and the funcpad. The 4D and others all degrade quite quickly and become inconsistent. It's also important for the pad to be unmovable on most surfaces, in that respect the S&S base is very good.

I find the rough pads to be better because they doesn't drag on your skin when your fingers are on them like smoother pads, those tend to drag a lot and moisture is unforgiving on those types of pads as much in friction as in the mouse's ability to track. Rough pads also have better characteristics in the area of heat and cold, for example playing in a really cold place like the CPL on a pad like a metal steelpad or icemat; they stay very cold and your arm/fingers touching it create lots of condensation on the pad itself. Plastic and cloth don't have that problem. As far as aim, I think a pad needs to be fast but offer some drag which gives you more control. Too slippery of a surface means your starting inertia will carry on too far into your movement and you will have to counter it by stopping, whereas it's easier to just keep applying more force to keep moving than to have to stop when you are already moving (on too slippery a pad)"



3D vs GSX at the CPL Summer 2003 event / steel's POV

He also offers some important aduice:

"A lot of players get stuck in the loop of switching back and forth between pads undecided, but most of the decent products out there can be used by any player given the chance so it has more to do with your attitude toward it than anything else. If there's an aspect with a new piece or a particular drawback to what you're using then you should definitely check out the better product but the more you've played with something the harder it will be to change later and the less you've played with something the less of its possible potential vou've reached."

Sensitivity

A player's aptitude with a specific sensitivity relies entirely upon his muscle memory and comfort level with his particular settings. Every little factor affects sensitivity: which grip is used, how high one sits, the mouse pad, the Hz of the mouse, the CS launch commands used, use of mouse skates etc.

As Rambo says:

"This is why it's so hard to have world class aim, it's years of experience and tweaking. Some find it easier than others because they have better hand-eye coordination."

steel has long been a user of low sensitivity coupled with low mouse acceleration set in the Logitech mouse drivers. This is not a popular sensitivity setup, most players at all levels prefer to play without any acceleration, but should be considered when reading his explanation of his requirements for mouse sensitivity:

"You have to be fast enough to turn 180 degrees at least with an easy movement that doesn't bend your hand a lot, so after you've done the 180 you can still aim easily. It has to be precise enough to be able to aim for a guy's head really far off. In close-range combat where enemies go around a corner and you are standing very close to them you have to be able to follow their model for at least ~150 degrees with precision, so if your

sensitivity is too low your hand will be way out of position as an enemy turns around you. Like at catwalk on de_dust2 if you are on the stairs for example and a terrorist pops out and starts going up in a really close range situation, if you can't consistently follow his model without lifting the mouse/twisting your hand you will lose a lot of those fights. In lots of situations where someone is shooting you in the back you have to be able to snap around and react, it's a typical type of situation you have to be ready to confront."

An appropriate sensitivity setting should allow a player to utilize all the elements of his game he must to succeed. It is not enough to be good in certain areas and ignore others that are made difficult by a bad sensitivity setting, thinking that being very good in one area will make up for it.

There is a useful quote players should remember which is called Cope's law:

"Overspecialization tends to lead to extinction."

Or as steel puts it:

"You have to be able to do some basic things, if your sensitivity is too low to do a 180 comfortably you can't check both sides of a doorway as you are first to go in for example. Checking corners is a huge part of CS, so is not getting shot in the back by a flanker. At the same time if you can't shoot long range effectively you will lose a lot of battles and you cant fight in some areas of some maps, that's a pretty big limitation."

Regarding the dilemma of balancing out being accurate at long range and being able to still check corners when entering areas he says:

"One reaction some people have is to get a huge pad and play with their arm, some people decided on a higher sensitivity and a precise mouse and a textured pad. I decided on acceleration, it's really different approaches to tackle the same problems."

Mouse skates

Mouse skates are a type of tape which is used on the feet of a mouse, typically made of Teflon. They reduce friction between the mouse and the pad/surface and make the friction that is there consistent. They are also easily cleanable due to their non-stick nature. Skates also come in different thicknesses and materials so it is advisable to buy those that cover the most surface area. On the negative side using skates raises the mouse further off the pad which can cause certain mouse-surface combinations to no longer track properly. They also wear down over time so they must be replaced which can lead to the player's relationship with his sensitivity being altered over time depending on the condition of his skates, this is one reason why some players do not use them.

steel offers his personal preference regarding skates:

"I find mouse skate type gizmos to be detrimental to a good consistent routine, so if your pad is decent unless your mouse feet really suck (as with the ones on some Microsoft mice) then you shouldn't have to add that factor into the mix. Also worth mentioning is they always wear out so as you keep playing you will be on a slightly sinusoidal sensitivity pattern, up and down up and down as you change them and wear them down. Add to the fact that sometimes one of them will catch a piece of grime or dirt and you'll have to change it individually and they often start overlapping into being a nuisance. In short, unless you have a specific need for very low friction you can definitely skip skates with no regrets."

Rambo's preference regarding skates:

"I'm a big fan of mouse skates; I've been using them since I first got my hands on them. It gives a consistent, large gliding surface. They are easier to clean, and can be easily replaced. Using your default mouse feet for too long can wear them down causing a different feel. I prefer the hard plastic kinds. Find one with big surface area, even if it overlaps your default feet, it's better that way. If it's too small, they can be pushed down and scrape a cloth mouse pad."

Mouse bungees/clips

Mouse bungees or clips are devices for holding the mouse cord in a particular manner as opposed to allowing it to bend or curve whichever way it is naturally inclined in relation to the mouse, the sturdiness of the cord and how it is fit across a desk. Typically these are used to prevent the mouse cord tugging on the mouse or in situations where the way the cord bends or gets stuck irritates the player in questions.

Rambo's personal preference:

"I'm not a personal fan of bungees, but if positioned properly they can reduce tugging and friction as well as coiling of the wire on the table."

steel's personal preference:

"I think a simple anchor for your cord is enough. I see the bungee as overkill, as long as you have something to clip extra cord length on it's fine. Just make sure your cord is never offering resistance. It's nice to have the cord hanging a little bit but I wouldn't say it's absolutely necessary, some people tape it to the bottom or side of the monitor."

Zoom sensitivity ratio

The zoom_sensitivity_ratio command changes the player's sensitivity upon zooming (scoping) based on the ratio setting he provides. So if the player uses a sensitivity value of 3 and sets his zoom_sensitivity_ratio to 2 then when zoomed his sensitivity would be 6. On the other hand if he set his zoom_sensitivity_ratio to 0.5 then when zoomed his sensitivity would be 1.5. Last but not least if he sets the zoom_sensitivity_ratio to 1 then his sensitivity will be 3 while zoomed as well as unzoomed. The default setting for this command is 1.2 and the large majority of top players use with the

default setting. To avoid confusion it is worth pointing out that when the player zooms out again his sensitivity returns to the original setting.

Rambo offers his perspective on zoom_sensitivity_ratio:

"This is just as important as your normal sensitivity, that's if you're AWPing or using the aug or commando. The zoom sens should be tweaked and muscle memorized by the user. Frod uses 0.777. You can help find your zoom sens by using the pregame mouse sensitivity warm up, flicking at pixels and dragging the zoom around."

steel adds:

"When I started playing CS competitively zoom_sensitivy_ratio wasn't a known variable so I always stuck to the default and never felt the need to change."

KEYBOARD

The player should get a USB keyboard and ensure it is one which allows multiple keys to be hit at once. A keyboard with a long cable is preferable also due to the difference in computer setups from home to LAN environments, it needs to be able to comfortably reach the position a player has it in his stance at home. It is useful to get a keyboard which his sturdy so it will not be damaged in transit, also one which is flat is good if that is according to the player's personal preference. Another thing to consider is the key travel, in other words how much the key must be pressed for it to input the action associated with it.

steel offers some simple aduice:

"Get a keyboard you can replace easily because getting used to a different layout/button press sensitivity can be a pain."

HEADPHONES/HEADSETS

When investigating headphones/headsets the player should seek to find ones which are comfortable and provide full 3D sound. If at all possible it can be useful to get some which come equipped with a USB sound card so they can be used on any computer with the same results. Likewise those which come with a microphone attached can be useful also. An important factor to consider regarding headphones is whether or not

they are open ear or closed ear. Open ear allow the player to hear his environment better such as his team-mates but can also mean he gets distracted by other sounds. Closed ear blocks out all sound but as a result the player cannot hear his team-mates.

steel's preference and opinions on headphones/headsets:

"I use the Sennheiser HD600 because I got them at bargain price, and they are excellent for music. Their sound definition is very balanced, so it's easy to pick up even the faintest sounds without turning the volume up really high. The bass is never overpowering (read: annoying). They are open-ear which means



Rambo

in VERY noisy environments I get to hear a lot of the ambient sound of the room which is the only drawback. It's nice to have open ear to be able to hear your team-mates scream, on the other hand. It's a bit of a compromise on that front but I always preferred to be able to hear my team-mates when possible.

The only recommendation I have is whether you're getting an open-ear or closed-ear headphones to make sure the sound is of high quality and well balanced. An unbalanced headphone will mute certain sounds (high-pitch sounds in some cases) and over-emphasize others. Typically bad headphones will overproduce bass which means AWP shots literally pain your ears and footsteps and more flat sounds will be underplayed. This has the side effect of the player turning up the volume to hear footsteps and by doing so causes his headphones to produce over-exaggerated bass that then becomes distorted.

The lower price-range headphones can be good but are somewhat of a gamble from what I've noticed, so it's best to borrow or try them out before buying or make sure the store has a good return policy in case the headphones are unsatisfactory. Headphones are also a highly subjective piece of equipment since people's hearing can be drastically different to their peers."

SETUP TWEAKS AND OPTIONS

Resolution

The higher the resolution a player uses the more pixels will be displayed. This is only necessary to a certain level, for example when playing in 800x600 a player

may see a few extra pixels which allow him to see through the blinds on de_inferno that a 640x480 player may not be able to see through. Most professional players use one of the following three resolution settings: 640x480, 800x600 or 1024x768. Ever since Valve's implementation of changeable crosshair sizes the resolution a player uses has become less important as a factor. It is worth noting that for players whose monitor cannot support at least 100Hz at 1024x768 they may well be able to use 100Hz at 800x600 and this change should be considered. Resolution choice is mostly personal preference in the modern era of Counter-Strike. One side note that should be made is to address the myth that the smaller the resolution the bigger the hitboxes in Counter-Strike are. Reducing the resolution simply displays less pixels and so things appear larger, they are in fact exactly the same size on the server and are in no way altered other than being scaled up on the player's screen.

steel adds:

"More important than the resolution itself is a high refresh rate I'd say, especially since the introduction of the crosshair size options has marginalized the difference of resolutions."

Mouse tweaks

Launch commands

The three commonly known launch commands relating to one's mouse sensitivity setup are: -noforcemparms -noforcemaccel -noforcemspd

These commands are placed in the "set launch options" box found by right clicking on the Counter-Strike game in the Steam menu and picking "properties". There is much confusion surrounding these commands as many different explanations have been offered for what each command controls and alters when used. Here are the most accurate and reasonable explanations to date:

-noforcemparms

This command makes Counter-Strike use the desktop mouse button settings. In other words turning off Counter-Strike's ability to reassign buttons already assigned to one's desktop, the third mouse button being an obvious example.

-noforcemaccel

This command makes Counter-Strike use the mouse acceleration settings on the player's desktop so if acceleration is disabled in Windows then it will be in Counter-Strike also.

-noforcemspd

This command makes Counter-Strike use the desktop mouse speed settings. This will change how the in-game sensitivity values relate to specific movement distances depending on what settings the player has in his desktop mouse options.

Mouse filter

Setting m_filter to "1" (or ticking the mouse filter box in the gui) turns on mouse filter, which essentially averages the input of mouse movements thus providing an artificial smoothing effect. It is advised that players set this variable to "0" "unticked).

Windows XP mouse acceleration

By default installations of Windows XP have a kind of built in mouse acceleration. Unless the player has been playing with this for a long time it is advised that he applies the mouse fix which removes this acceleration. Even a player such as steel who uses mouse acceleration as part of his sensitivity setup uses the mouse fix to remove the faulty XP acceleration, instead choosing to set his degree of mouse acceleration in the Logitech mouse drivers.

http://files.filefront.com/mouse+fixzip/;4217282;/fileinfo.html link to the mouse fix.

Mouse Hertz (Hz)

When using USB a modern day mouse will run at up to 125Hz. This is perfectly acceptable though some players may wish to overclock their USB port to up to 500Hz using a tweak. Whether or not the player chooses to do this is entirely down to personal preference. It is unwise to run a mouse through the PS2 port where the mouse may only run at 60Hz unless specifically overclocked, and even then the exact speed will be variable depending on when it is checked. USB is superior to PS2 and should be prioritized in a mouse.

http://files.filefront.com/usbmrs11exe/;6927799;;/fileinfo.html link to the tweak.

Pointer precision

If the player is using a mouse without special drivers from the mouse manufacturer then he is advised to unclick the "enhance pointer precision" box in the mouse properties as this relates to the aforementioned XP faulty mouse acceleration.

UIDEO

Vertical sync

The simple explanation of this video card option is that it limits the FPS of the player's graphics card to that of the refresh rate setting of his monitor. So if the player's monitor refresh rate was set at 60Hz then the video card would not display more than 60 frames per second. A large majority of professional players play with this set to off as doing so allows higher frame rates and higher fps on poorer systems/monitor setups. At LAN events one can not always be certain equipment will be state of the art and so it is best to get used to playing with this setting off so there are no nasty surprises in store. Turning this option off will produce a slight tearing effect on parts of the screen but this is a small price to pay for higher fps on poorer systems. Ideally the FPS in Counter-Strike should always be at 99 or 100 so if the player decides to leave this setting on then he must ensure he sets his monitor Hz to 100 or above.

Refresh rate (Hz)*

The Hz setting that can be used will depend largely on the player's monitor as each monitor has a specific range of values it can support and anything outside that range won't display. Ideally the player would have the Hz setting as high as he could but bearing in mind the uncertainty of what equipment will be able on hand at LAN events it is best to simply ensure this setting is at

minimum set to 100Hz and at maximum to 120Hz. This command can also be set purely for use in Counter-Strike by not changing the setting in the video card settings and simply using the –freq command in the launch options. "-freq 100" would set the Hz to 100 and so on.

As steel explains:

"100fps means your screen is changing 100 times a second, or every 10ms. If your monitor can't maintain the same rate then you're not seeing all you should be. 100hz is good for that but at 100hz you will see tearing on the screen, that's why 120hz is preferable."

*This only applies to CRT monitors.

Reforce

Programs like Reforce are commonly used by professional level players to change their refresh rate in windows at various resolution settings. Windows XP by default is set to 60Hz refresh rate which will strain most people's eyes after looking at it for a while and could possibly even damage eyes in the long run. As mentioned in the previous section 100Hz is the minimum ideal value (thought 85Hz could be used if absolutely necessary due to old hardware, though vertical sync must definitely be turned off in such a scenario)

An odd phenomenon has been observed when using Reforce which steel explains:

"Reforce has a weird effect on your sensitivity that relates to the Hz your monitor is set at. For a reason I can't quite explain Reforce speeds up your sensitivity in a linear fashion as you set your monitor Hz higher. So a sensitivity of 2 at 60hz might feel more like 4 at 120hz. This phenomenon seems unique to Reforce and isn't present with integrated video card driver Hz overrides (At least in NVIDIA's case, ATI cards I haven't had much experience with). Something to keep in mind when going to tournaments with/without Reforce."

Gamma and brightness

The difference between these two settings needs to be understood to get the most out of both. Often found in the "colour correction" area of video card settings gamma is, without going into a complicated explanation revolving around cathode ray tubes, a form of correction. The higher you set it the less dark the dark areas in Counter-Strike will be to your eyes, this is typically the reason why it is altered by players. The ideal setting would be high enough that a player can see into the vents on de_nuke but not too high that it is difficult to differentiate between colours or to hurt the player's eyes when he has been looking at the screen for long periods of time. Some competitions also set limits on how high a player's gamma can be set to so it is a good

idea to investigate those rules and play with values set within that range so as to be prepared for such tournaments. Brightness on the other hand controls just that, how bright the screen's output is. Again the player should find a balance where everything is bright enough to see but not too bright that it may damage or strain his eyes. Just as with volume for sound this area is about tweaking until the player has found the right balance and most importantly values which will not damage him in any way.

Digital vibrance

The digital vibrance slider increases the colour saturation of images displayed so that images appear crisper and brighter.

Rambo says:

"Personal preference, I see a lot of pros use at least 1 notch of it."

Getting better fps

On slower systems there are some commands within the video card options which can be set to improve FPS within Counter-Strike. One of these is Anti-Aliasing which should be set to none/off. The ideal FPS for Counter-Strike is 100. It is also worth noting that a common misperception regarding how to increase FPS is buying a better video card. In reality the vast majority of factors which determine how much FPS a player will get are based on his CPU speed.



Rambo's setup:

Sensitivity: 25.7cm for a 180 degree turn

default, 1.2 zoom sensitivity ratio:

Monitor Hz: 100

Resolution: 1024x768

Crosshair options: small, green and translucent

Windows sensitivity: default Mouse fix: on

Launch options: -noforcemparms

-noforcemspd -noforcemaccel

500 with usbmrs1.1 program Mouse Hz:

steel's setup:

Sensitivity: 50cm for a 180 degree turn*

default, 1.2 zoom sensitivity ratio:

Monitor Hz: 120 800x600 Resolution:

medium, green and translucent 2 notches out of 10 Crosshair options:

Windows sensitivity:

Mouse fix: on Launch options: none

Mouse Hz: default when he played

professional but would

recommend 500



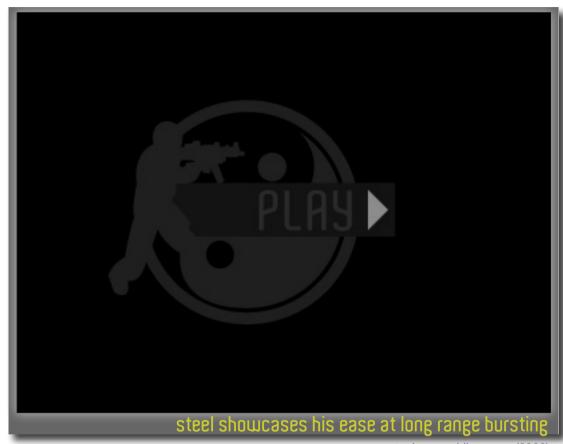
Rambo's setup

^{*}measurement made with mouse acceleration turned off. When playing steel has mouse acceleration set to low in the Logitech mouse drivers

- A number of factors play into which mouse you should choose and these need to be weighed up and considered.
- It's important to be comfortable when gripping your mouse so your hand isn't aching after use. If your hand fits the shape naturally this is a plus too.
- The mouse needs to be able to track your mouse movements accurately.
- The mouse feet need to be suitable for gaming.
- The mouse should be compatible with your pad/surface, tracking accurately.
- The wire length of the mouth needs to be of a satisfactory length.
- Unless you use very high sensitivity 400 or 800 DPI should be enough in a mouse.
- The kind of mousepad best for you may depend on what kind of sensitivity player you are and what kind of playing style you employ.
- When you've found a mousepad you like don't switch around amongst other pads trying them out for no good reason. The longer you've used one pad the more

- adapted you will be to it and so able to get the most out of your game with it.
- How good a player is with his sensitivity is down to his muscle memory and how comfortable he is with his settings.
- Sensitivity is entirely down to personal preference but the player should be able to perform certain actions that Counter-Strike demands such as a 180 degree turn and aiming at long range.
- Don't over-emphasize one element of aiming with your sensitivity at the expense of others; this will limit your game.
- Zoom_sensitivity_ratio changes your sensitivity when you scope according to the value you pick for it.
- Pick the resolution you prefer and one which allows you to use at least 100Hz refresh rate on your monitor.
- A USB keyboard is best which allows multiple keys to be pressed at once. It can also be good if it is flat and has a long cable.
- It's a good idea to get a keyboard which can be easily replaced as getting used to another layout can be time-consuming.
- Mouse skates are entirely personal preference, get them if you like the way they affect the friction of your mouse feet and don't mind having to replace them.
- Get headphones that are comfortable and have full 3D sound. Other good features include a USB sound card built in, a microphone and if the player wants to hear his team-mates having open ear.
- Mouse bungees/clips are useful if you feel as though your mouse cord's coiling or tugging is hindering your play. A simple piece of tape can be used if you do not want to spend money.

- Applying the mouse fix disables the default Windows XP acceleration.
- The Hz setting of your USB port can be overclocked with a tweak to be more responsive, this is entirely personal preference.
- Enhanced pointer precision should be unticked if you are not using special mouse drivers from the manufacturer.
- Vertical sync should be set to off in most cases in order to use a high refresh rate and get higher FPS.
- A refresh rate of at least 100Hz and possibly 120Hz should be used.
- You want to have at least 99/100fps so use a program like Reforce to set the refresh rate or the –freq command in the launch options.
- Set your gamma and brightness so you can see the required elements of Counter-Strike well enough but not so high that it hurts or damages your eyes. Being able to see into the vents on de_nuke is a good guideline. Also look into the settings different LAN tournaments allow.
- Turn anti-aliasing off to ensure you get 100 FPS.
- Buying a better graphics card won't necessarily increase your FPS.



steel vs a public server (2003)

STANCE

For the purpose of this guide a stance is a description of how the arm and body are positioned while playing. Every factor, no matter how seemingly little, affects how the player controls his sensitivity. Hand-eye coordination, reaction speed and even furniture determine a player's comfortable stance. It is important to try and keep one's stance as consistent as possible so it can be accurately replicated. When playing on different computers replication can be achieved by attempting to get every single detail in line with the stance used on one's home computer.

steel offers this warning about taking one's stance seriously:

"Don't rob yourself of that comfort. Your mind has trouble keeping up when you have things wrong physically."

The 2 parts of a stance

Arm

1. Finger

Finger players (also known as the claw grip) generally play more methodically. They drag with their elbow while revealing corners, keeping their fingers on the table. They turn corners and keep movement to a minimum.

2. Wrist

Wrist players use a flicking style. They turn corners with fast flick motions and rely heavily on muscle memory. Their movement is generally better because they are fidgety.

3. Forearm

These players rely on a drag type of aim. They are lazier players, meaning they like to be stationary when possible. Usually players with faster reaction speeds use this type. Since they don't track as fast they rely upon their first shot to make up for it. This type of player usually uses low sensitivity.

4. Elbow

These types of players can use any of the stances. Typically they are low sensitivity players and have a lot of control. These players have or almost have their elbow on the table. Their arm is usually angled inwards and has a lot of control. This forces the player to slouch inwards with his body.

Body

- 1. Posture, leaning forwards or backwards.
- 2. Distance between the player and the monitor/table.
- 3. The height the player is sitting at.
- 4. Angled, facing left or right.
- 5. Arm rests and back supports on chairs affect aim.

Rambo adds:

"In a stance you want complete stability and control. If you feel like you are uncomfortable in anyway, you need to adjust that part. Like if your arm is too low, raise chair"

Aspects of Awareness

Important factors which contribute to the player's level of in-game awareness are:

- Sound
- Radar/Scoreboard
- Team-mate communication
- Demos the player has watched (scouting report)
- Past rounds

Sound

It is important to have the proper hardware, this includes having good headphones and a proper 3D sound card (so the player can differentiate between sounds from left and right as well as depth) Once the player masters the sound element of Counter-Strike he will be able to pinpoint any sound. It is important to balance the player's overall game volume with the volume of his team's voice communications as both are equally important. Overall volume should also be kept low enough that it is comfortable and yet high enough that small sounds like footsteps can be detected. Some tweaking may be required to find the right balance in these important areas.

See the sound section for more information



3D vs mTw at Clikarena in 2003 / steel's POV

Radar/Scoreboard

Within a few rounds if not before the beginning of the game the player should know where each of his team-mates likes to go or play on a specific map. This allows the player to mentally put each player in a specific area of the map as CT or T so he knows how to approach the round as it begins. Later in the round

when he sees a team-mate die he should know whereabouts it happened based on the radar and that teammate's role. It is also worth noting which enemies have killed which team-mates as it allows the player to mentally place the opposition in areas on the map also. This can also give the player a general idea of how injured the enemies are and what weapons they are using.

See the radar section for more information.

Team-mate communication

When everyone on a team is communicating effectively and relaying information as they get it all members of the team will know and be able to place enemies and what those enemies are doing at any given moment. As a result the team can properly anticipate attacks and react to them. It is important to remember when relaying information to not simply dictate events but give pertinent information.

Rambo offers this example of where team communication is essential:

"If you are doing a split into a bombsite, instead of saying go you ask if everyone is ready. Then call a specific time so everyone is on the same page. Execution relies heavily on communication."

See the team communication section for more information



3D vs RDW at the CPL Summer2003 event / steel's POV

Demos the player has watched (scouting report)

Having scouted out the opposition, watching demos of them in previous games, will allow the player to better anticipate or make educated guesses regarding what the enemy may attempt in-game. During such scouting it is useful to take note of where the opposition's weakest players are positioned or which areas specific players favour as this is information which can be used to directly inform one's in-game awareness.

As Rambo says:

"This way I can anticipate which strategies they like and exploit weaknesses. I can put people in certain locations and rotate properly for their strategy"

See the preparation section for more information.

Past rounds

How opponents have behaved in past rounds plays into both how they may behave again and how the player can anticipate or react to their future actions. For example if the enemy have tried a really crazy or aggressive strategy on the pistol round of a game then when it comes to the next gun round they may well try something similar in the hopes of catching the player and his team off guard again. Likewise if the opposition has run the strat two or three times in a row and it has succeeded then it is likely they will run it again so the player must continue to adapt and be aware.



3D vs fnatic at the CPL Winter 2005 event

steel makes that same point in a more memorable manner:

"The worst thing a player can do is not be ready for a strat he has already faced."

Rambo explains his through process:

"I try to find a strat in our arsenal which best counters theirs, maybe it didn't work last round but if that's because of some tangible reason I can explain then it might be worth running again."

Summary:

- Make sure you have the proper sound hardware like good headphones and a 3D sound card.
- Make sure your volume is high enough to hear footsteps but not too high that it impairs your concentration.
- Find the right balance between overall volume and the volume of your team's voice communications.
- Learn where your team-mates like to go so you know where they are based on the radar.
- When your team-mates die you should know where they were and also where the enemy who killed them is as a result.
- If everyone in a team is communicating properly then you all have a global pool of information on the enemy.
- Scouting the other team out with demos can help increase your ingame awareness of what they will do.
- What the other team have tried on past rounds plays into what they might do next so bear it in mind and adapt to it.

 Just because a strat doesn't work doesn't mean it can't in the future if you can explain the exact reason it didn't in that situation.

RADAR

The radar shows the player in which direction and how far away his team-mates are, it also indicates if they are above or below him relating to the differing levels of the map.

Rambo offers this piece of simple but useful aduice regarding the radar:

"It's good practice to always check your radar while leaving spawn, to see exactly where your team-mates are going"

When a team-mate dies and their dot disappears from the radar an estimated guess can be made upon the area where the enemy is based off the team-mate's last known location. A simple example would be if the player is holding bombsite A on de_dust2 as a Counter-Terrorist and his team-mate's dot disappears from short A/catwalk area then it is wise to anticipate an attack from that area as opposed to long A where a team-mate's dot is still present.

Rambo offers his method for figuring out how far away a team-mate is:

"I like to face myself towards the dot on the radar, to further figure out where my team-mate is located. I line up the vertical line, and the dot, and use the distance between the dot and myself to locate his position."

The decision of whether to use a translucent or non-translucent radar is entirely subjective and should be made based on which is easier to see for the player relative to his other settings such as gamma and monitor brightness.



Sound

The way the sound mechanics of Counter-Strike work is fairly simple and straight forwards. The main factor that goes into whether the player hears something or not is distance. As a result as soon as the player is able to hear an enemy running or shooting that enemy is also able to hear sounds emitted from the player.

As Rambo puts it:

"If you can hear them, they can probably hear you."

steel offers this tip:

"To pinpoint sounds a good trick is to move your view side to side, then the stereo separation will let you triangulate where a sound is coming from."

Using his current location and the radar a player should further be able to pinpoint where specific sounds are coming from on the map. Having a good pair of headphones and a dedicated sound card should also allow the player to locate sounds easily. Sound is a big part of competitive Counter-Strike so ideally even the faintest sound should allow the player to locate exactly where it came from by knowing the map areas and distances by heart and using precise equipment.



3D vs United5 at Everlan 2004 / steel's POV

Using sound to trick enemies

A simple trick which is highly effective is that when the player is running on the very edge of a surface the footstep sound Counter-Strike will make for the enemy will be that of the surface below the player. A good example of this is running along the metal area up the ladder on de_nuke, the player will find the footstep sound made is as if the player were running along the floor as opposed to a metal object.

Rambo tells of a simple trick he uses:

"Sometimes to lure an opponent out I'll shoot a few shots into nowhere then hold the angle for the opponent to peek. Sometimes it will draw them out."

Sounds can also be used to mask other sounds so for example if a grenade explodes the second the player begins defusing the bomb the defuse sound may not be heard by the opponent. The player can also trick an opponent into thinking he has picked up the bomb by dropping his pistol and then picking it up. Again this can be used to lure enemies out. The enemy can be fooled into thinking the player has dropped from somewhere by jumping and holding crouch so a footstep is made.

Another little titbit Rambo offers up:

"If you shoot a silenced colt into the distance, it sometimes replicates footstep noises and can fake players out."

It can be useful to throw a grenade far off so as to fool an enemy into thinking the player's position is closer to the grenade than it really is. The player is able to hear the enemy's reloading sounds and vice-versa so this can be used to the player's advantage by pretending to reload while watching a corner/spot. Players with good sound will be able to determine what the enemy is doing or about to do. A simple trick for faking the enemy

is to run past an area and then walk silently back that way. Spamming an entire clip into a wall to get an enemy to peek can be a useful trick to employ when the player has a team-mate standing by to kill the peeking enemy.

- Pinpoint where sounds are by moving your view side to side so you can mentally figure out where the sound is coming from.
- Running on the very edge of a surface can trick the enemy into hearing the sound of the surface below being run on.
- Sounds can be used to mask other sounds such as grenades exploding masking a defuse sound.
- Dropping your pistol and picking it up can sound like you've picked up the bomb to an enemy.
- You can pretend to reload to get an enemy to peek out when he hears the clicking.
- By spamming an entire clip into a wall and reloading you can allow a team-mate to kill the enemy who peeks thinking you are no danger.
- Running past an area then walking back can fool enemies into thinking you aren't going to that site/area.



WALL SHOOTING

Wall shooting is a very important concept in Counter-Strike 1.6. There are several reasons why the player should want to shoot through walls besides the obvious need to eliminate an enemy.

The most important and perhaps most abstract concept regarding wall shooting is that that player should attempt to visualize the map as being completely transparent or without walls. Playing from this mindset the player can always anticipate where to shoot in order to hit players he has heard or seen strafing away behind a wall.

steel offers this sage aduice for players who use wall shooting:

"Be aware, though, that whenever you are wall shooting you expose your own position to the enemy either through the sound of your weapon firing, or the triangulation of bullet holes appearing through the wall you are shooting"

As a result of that wall shooting generally requires very good game sense before becoming a very effective technique. It's definitely something of great importance to master, though. To counter a potential threat to himself from wall shooting the player should position himself so he has good cover nearby in case he has to reload or misses and the enemy surprises him.



3D vs SK at the CPL Winter 2002 event / Rambo's POV

Wall shooting as insurance

Very often the player can use wall shooting as an insurance method, for example against an AWPer that the player thinks may peek to take a shot. By shooting through the corner of the wall the player thinks the AWPer will peek he is gaining insurance against him doing so. The best techniques for doing this are either a slow tap or a high frequency burst of 2 or 3 bullets. The reasoning behind this is

not to give the AWPer a chance to peek and as a result get a shot off/kill the player. This concept could be termed a pre-emptive wallspam.

Against rushes

Wall shooting can also be an excellent way of deterring rushes on the player's position/area. For example if playing the ramp room on de_nuke the player shoots through the wall to the radio room area rushes can be slowed down or crippled almost entirely before they reach the player. In the same spirit when facing players who are saving with glocks/usps (weapons which do not fire through walls) wall shooting can be used to completely shield the player while inflicting damage on the enemies.

All rifles, sniper weapons and the desert eagle can fire through walls. Only the AWP can fire through two separate walls/objects though.

The best way to learn the alignments for specific wallshots is to run around custom designed versions of the competitive maps with transparent walls or fly around in free-view spectator mode. The player needs to be able to visualize what is behind a wall and use sound as a guide to aiming.

Rambo adds:

"Take your time when you shoot through a wall as it dampens damage. Control your recoil and aim for head shots. You can hear when people are getting hit, so keep shooting the same area if you hear it."

Studying wall shots properly can lead to that information being stored forever so the player is advised to make sure he learns the right alignments from the outset so that he does not in a later situation assume he is shooting the right part when in fact he is not. A good example of this is the B halls on de_dust2, shooting from the bombsite into the hall.

- Learn to visualize the map as though it had no walls.
- Remember when you shoot a wall you expose your own position.
- When wall shooting make sure you have cover nearby so you can reload or hide.
- You can use wall shooting as insurance when you know a player is likely to peek out from one to try and shoot you.
- Slow tapping or a high frequency 2 or 3 bullet burst are the two best techniques for insurance wall shooting.
- Wall shooting can slow down or cripple rushes if done properly.
- When facing enemies with weapons which do not fire through walls using cover can shield you while you inflict damage upon them.
- All rifles, sniper weapons and the desert eagle can fire through walls but only the AWP can fire through two.
- Use transparent versions of maps or flying around in spectator free-view mode to learn the right alignment for wall shots.
- Learn the correct spots for wall shooting early so you don't make false assumptions later on.
- Take your time while wall shooting since you are delivering less damage.
- If you hear someone get hit when wall shooting keep aiming at that area.
- In a defensive situation, one player player shooting and the other covering the area where the enemies will come from can be very effective as the wall shooter still has cover if the enemies get past.

DE_CPL_MILL

CT positions

Left

It is recommended the player is either spotting down from above the ladder in the site, or camping a passive angle as he pleases. If the player has a good spawn, peeking down the stairs towards the terrorist side can be effective for AWPers. Flashes should be thrown early to prevent a rush.

Middle

Don't get picked off, the player's job is to counter-flash middle and prevent the enemy from coming up and squeezing team-mates in kitty. Help for kitty should be provided if middle is clear.

Right

Kitty counter-nades is the best chance of defending this spot. Spot/counter-nade.

Sewer

The player must not get picked, just spot. Back up should be provided if needed, the player just lets his team know if so.



3D vs United5 at the CPL Winter 2003 event













Some important wallshots on de_cpl_mill

DE_DUST2

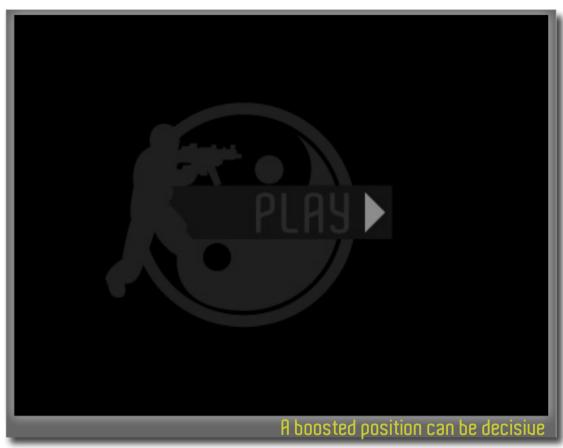
CT positions

Long A

Long can be played either by taking it quickly or playing passively. When taking it quickly it's best for the player to pre-nade into the hallway and then setup in his most comfortable spot. When playing passively in the site the player should be aware of whether or not the enemy can get into the pit or if they took long A. Upon spotting the enemy the player should use grenades to harass any potential progress into the bomb site.

Catwalk (a.k.a. short A)

This area can be played passively or aggressively. If the player is playing aggressively then it is best to be boosted by a team-mate on the boxes next to CT spawn so as to beat the terrorists to the catwalk. The player must be aware that playing catwalk aggressively makes him very vulnerable to being grenaded. The advantage of playing catwalk aggressively is the quicker rotation it allows to the B bombsite or middle, as well as advance notice in the case of an A attack. The advantages of playing defensively are the reduced chance of being picked off/killed early as well as more flexibility in setting up the team's defence (manoeuvrability and counter-flashing for example)



3D vs team9 at the CPL Summer2003 event / Rambo's POV

Middle

This position perhaps holds the most responsibility for any single player on de_dust2 on defence. This player is responsible for watching middle, rotating to bombsite B, giving advance warning of catwalk advances and rotation to A depending on what occurs in any given round. This spot is typically held by the designated AWP user on a team due to the narrow field of view and distance towards the terrorist part of middle, as well as the constant terrorist activity typical to the area. Due to his importance it is critical this player is not easily picked off by the enemy.

В

Bombsite B can also be held aggressively or passively but in both cases a potential B rush requires counter-flashing and grenades into the halls. The terrorist entrance to B is essentially a long hallway so watching it from the back of the site gives one advance warning which allows for quicker rotation. This comes at the expense of being in a more conspicuous position; an AWP is usually used for this job.

Passive play is also quite common due to the large amount of good spots which can be used; this is advantageous as the terrorists have many areas they must clear to secure the site. An even more passive way to play B is outside the bombsite entirely. This has the advantage of practically guaranteeing the player survives the initial B attack while still being able to get shots off. On the other hand terrorists can get inside the bombsite with almost no resistance and the CTs get almost no advance warning of attack.

Rambo's rules of thumb:

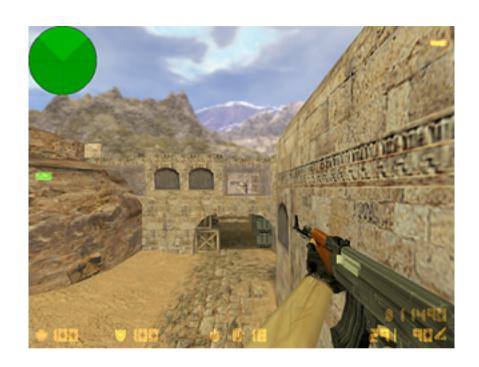
"B - use your nades early to stop a rush and put you preferably somewhere in the platform spotting down or lurking with counter nades. Use wall spams early.

Mid - sniper spot. Watches heart of the map. Don't get picked off. Help b then watch middle.

Catwalk - use your nades well. Also don't get naded.

Long a - take it early with nades, pick an angle you like. If not close, spot deep and prevent them from getting close."



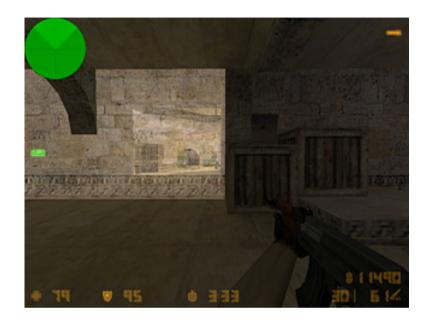






Notable wallshots on dust2









Notable wallshots on dust2

DE_INFERNO

CT positions

В

Flashing and watching the hallway is a good way to play this area aggressively and gives good advance notice as well as being a narrow hallway to watch. Escape is also fairly easy when under pressure. Once the player has established a good aggressive position his team-mate can rotate.

When playing passively it is advisable for the player to use a lot of counter-flashes and place himself in an area where he can't be flashed due to there being no roof. Even when playing passively the player can take back the banana by flashing over and clearing the area. The player should keep in mind that it takes a relatively long time to back up from banana into the site, and then from the arch into either side of the site, so if a large number of terrorists are pushed and the player peeks banana he almost certainly die.

Middle

Playing the middle super aggressively means the player is constantly challenging and pressuring the terrorists on their ramp area. This is a good position to deduce where the enemy are likely to be going and make advance calls. A good way to watch middle is to play in either corner of middle forcing the terrorists to gamble



3D vs SK at the CPL Summer 2003 event

(guess) which side the player is on when moving up. This also allows the player to watch the house area simultaneously.

Playing passively is best done from the CT spawn area. From here the player can watch middle, rotate rapidly, escape easily and counter-nade safely.

A

This area should typically be played defensively as the angles and proper grenade usage can be used to really hurt the terrorists. It is advisable to choose a spot where one can help the hall area also. It is also worthwhile using the multitude of angles and boosts/boxes inside the site. The key here is the player working with a partner to setup crossfires and nading for each other.

Halls

Playing the halls area aggressively allows advanced warning of attacks and can catch terrorists off guard, it is very dangerous though. Playing this area passively typically involves the player working with a team-mate in the site or in the pit. These two players must coordinate on flashing and smoking in order to delay the terrorists as much as possible. The player should try and pick a spot that can easily help the entrance of A.

Rambo's rules of thumb:

"Banana - use your HE nades to take early position of banana, then spot down from the box for early notice.



3D vs Gamers.nu at the CPL Summer 2004 event

Middle - use your flashes to disrupt the timing of attacks. Usually A is attacked from middle and hall at the same time. This also allows your other team-mates to get ready

Hall - don't get picked off, just spot and listen, then use nades to stop them from coming out."

DE_NUKE

CT positions

Outside

When holding outside with a rifle it is preferable to play passively and concentrate on slowing the enemy down/flashing them and calling out how many of them are attacking to one's team. This area is typically used as a nuisance spot where the player's job is to keep the terrorists from making too much uncontested progress toward the bombsites, especially the entrance to the upper site. The usual practice is for an AWPer to play outside as most of the battles take place over long range and the AWPer can reposition themselves multiple times. Outside allows the player to rotate to the upper site through the entrance and the lower site via the metal stairs.

Upper

Typically when playing upper the first priority of a player is in stopping a potential rush, something which can be achieved by pre-emptive nading and flashing. Once this has been done the player should setup in a spot that compliments his team-mate as well as one which is least vulnerable to flashing. The upper site is particularly prone to wallshooting from the terrorists, especially on the top of the rafters. The player also needs to be



3D vs nerve at Everlan 2004

aware that when playing on top of the yellow hut he is extremely vulnerable to being naded through it and so it is important to be careful when playing around it, especially with regards to noise from himself. When the ramp room is compromised upper players can quickly rotate to lower through the vents.

Ramp

Ramp players should use flashbangs which to enable them to get into position. It can be useful for the player to spot down into the radio room so as to have advance notice of when the terrorists are coming so he can counter-nade, spam or call for backup appropriate to the situation. Ramp players should be very familiar with the spam areas along the wall which can hit into the upper site as well as the terrorist lobby area. If the ramp players find themselves overpowered by flashes it is a good idea to reposition in lower, though their teammates need to be informed of this.

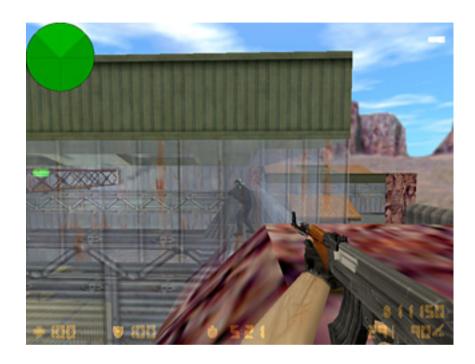
Playing the ramp aggressively can be highly effective in catching terrorists of guard as well as allowing quick rotation to the upper site.

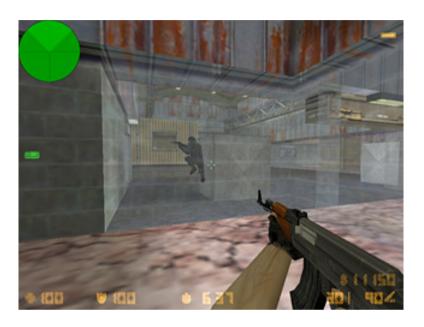
Rambo's rules of thumb:

"Outside - don't get picked off. Just spot and be accurate with your calls. Example: calling numbers, this way you can guess if they're splitting upper. Just prevent them from getting to under ladder or lower from outside. Also let your teammates know if they can get to entrance.

Upper - use your nades early to stop a rush, and then pick a spot you can't be spammed or flashed in.

Ramp - use your flashes early to stop a rush. Try to spot down and/or utilize wall spamming."

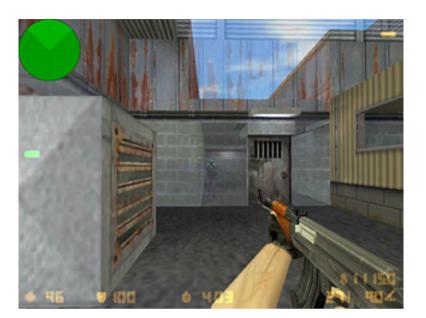










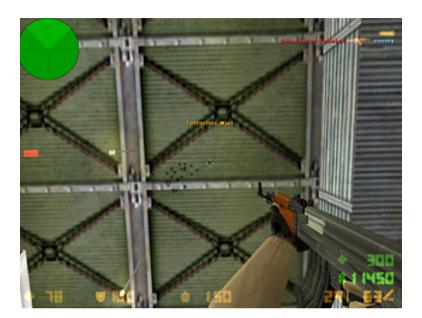




Illustrated here are some important wallshots on de_nuke







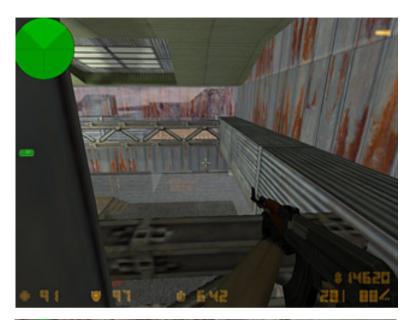


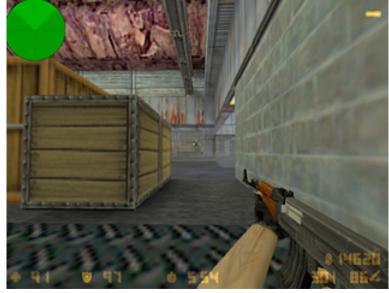
Illustrated here are some important wallshots on de_nuke











DE_TRAIN

Middle

The terrorist middle area always has to be flashed the beginning of a round to stop a potential rush. It is also important that the player repositions himself to stop any terrorists coming out and picking off CTs. It is ideal to watch middle aggressively enough that the terrorists can't get shooting angles on the Z halls or alley. An AWPer can watch middle from the Z hall itself. The middle player needs to be covered from the alley and ladder angles while being close enough to backup those positions. The middle player can push sometimes to clear the middle area or flank through it.

Ladder

This area can be played aggressively or from the bomb train, usually with an AWP. Playing aggressively typically means coordinating with the middle player so as to nade the middle at the start of the round and push up according to each player's angles. Playing aggressively at the ladder gives good spamming/nading opportunities as well as being good proximity for hearing footsteps and flanking. This is also a good position for backing up the middle player.



3D vs mTw at Clikarena 2003 / steel's POV

Alley

This position calls for a large amount of counter-flashing and nading. Smoke is a useful way to harass the terrorists in the alley and also gives the player cover to spam and pre-fire. The main idea in the alley is to stop the initial rush and make the enemy work for every inch without getting picked off.

Lower (inner site)

This area can be played aggressively and defensively. The idea behind playing it aggressively is to get early warning of a rush or to be able to call out numbers of attackers for one's team. The player can also hear sounds from the ladder area as well as being able to flank quickly. Another advantage of this kind of play is when nobody is spotted the aggressive player can hold the entire site by himself. Playing defensively means delaying the terrorists while waiting for backup to arrive.

Upper (inner site)

This area can be played aggressively and defensively. The player can push top ramp and spot down the box hall for early notice. A player can hold inner site by himself due to only having to watch one angle. If watching defensively, an AWP at the CT top ramp or lurking near bomb train or pop dog can be effective.

Rambo's rule of thumb:

"Aggressive is good for countering AWPs coming out of the middle and ladder areas."



3D vs mTw at Clikarena 2003 / steel's POV



Due to the nature of competitive CS and the difference between the two sides of play (Counter-Terrorist and Terrorist) the angle at which players aim and move out at is a factor in how successful they will be when they engage the enemy.

Good angles versus bad angles

Peeking further away from the wall is usually best as the player gets more time to react and can see the cleared angle faster. If one is playing defensive it is advisable to hold an angle at headshot level and use the map for cover. If one should miss or need to wait for recoil cover is close at hand. The player should hold an angle where he only has to aim horizontally as opposed to both vertically and horizontally.

Steel adds:

"It's also important to understand that what you see on your screen relative to your player model comes out of the exact middle of him as other players see you."

When holding or peeking an angle close to a wall the player has less time to react. However, holding an angle close can be best from time to time, it's all situational. When holding a defensive position the player is relying entirely upon reaction speed and positioning.



3D vs fnatic at ESWC 2006 / Rambo's POV

Rambo offers this:

"When aggressively peeking, try to peek away from the wall in front of you."

- Peek further away from the wall so you have more time to react and can see the area quicker.
- Hold your angle at the headshot level when playing defensively.
- Use the map for cover in case of a miss or having to reload.
- Try to hold an angle so you only have to aim horizontally.
- Remember your view comes from the middle of your player model.
- The closer the angle you hold on a wall the less time you have to react.
- When peeking aggressively peek away from the wall in front.



Guidelines for the bomb carrier

The player carrying the bomb has the most responsibility of the offensive team. This player should never be alone unless the specific strategy being run is a fake in which he is required to be. It is best for the bomb carrier to stick with a group of team-mates. If the enemy spots the bomb, the player can use that against them by having his team continue faking that site and rotating to the other site with the bomb. The player should never lead a rush with the bomb; likewise an AWPer should not carry the bomb. The bomb can be picked up through thin walls and doors.

The bomb should never be planted unless the site has been cleared of enemies. The bomb should be planted either in a default location well known to the carrier's team or one in which the amount of his team-mates can see it. The bomb should be planted as soon as a site is clear so as to put the maximum pressure on the CT team.

As the bomb carrier one must be aware of which sites CTs have been eliminated from. So if a CT has been killed at B then it is typically a good idea to head towards it for the event the other CT playing B is killed also. The bomb has a timer of 35 seconds before it explodes and takes approximately 5 seconds for a CT to defuse with a defuse kit and 10 seconds without.



3D vs Gamers.nu at CPL Summer 2003 / steel's POV

If the bomb carrier plants in a non-default location he should inform the rest of his team so they are aware of this. When planting it is advisable to duck so the player's hitboxes are reduced.

- If you have the bomb never go it alone unless that's part of the strategy.
- The bomb carrier should stick with a group of his team.
- If you are spotted with the bomb you can use that against the enemy by rotating to the other bombsite while your team keep faking.
- Never lead a rush with the bomb or carry it if you have an AWP.
- The bomb can be picked up through thin wall/doors.
- Never plant if the site hasn't been cleared.
- Plant in the default location or the one with the best visibility to most of your team.
- Be aware of which sites enemies are dying in or around.
- The bomb takes 35 seconds to explode.
- Tell your team-mates if you plant in a non-obvious spot.
- · Duck while planting.



THEORY

Before the player can fully understand and integrate his experience in solving actual in-game situations it is important he has a good grasp on the theory of winning 1vX situations. From this framework his experience will mould his instinctual ability to react to the variety of situations a player is faced with in the best possible way.

The first thing the player must do is to figure out the locations of the remaining enemies on the map. Next he should analyse which enemy poses the biggest/most immediate threat to him, putting himself into a position where that enemy becomes his prime focus. Ideally the player will eliminate that enemy without exposing himself unduly so he can progress to the next objective. It is important the player minimizes his chances of dying in any of these situations.

Rambo explains:

"In a clutch situation you should always be thinking ahead, this way you have a goal and set on what you're going to do. Even before you fight guy #1, you can already be thinking about where and how you're going to take guy #2."



3D vs nerve at Everlan 2004 / steel's POV



The basic theory of 1vX play is:

- 1. Locate enemy positions.
- 2. Decide whether to go aggressive or defensive.
- 3. Isolate the most immediate threat.
- 4. Rinse and repeat for remaining enemies.

The player should attempt to memorize this theory; it may be easier to simply remember "locate, aggressive or defensive, isolate and repeat" as long as he understands the meaning behind each in the context of the others. An example of step 2 of the theory would be if the player is lurking somewhere and he hears an enemy, he can choose to wait for the enemy to come to him.

This kind of approach applies in clutch/1vX situations of any magnitude. It is worth noting that surviving in each situation of facing an enemy does not necessary mean being defensive. Survival in Counter-Strike is often defined by eliminating the opposition.

- · Figure out where the enemies are.
- Decide which enemy is the biggest threat to you.
- Decide whether to go aggressive or defensive in your approach.
- Try and kill the first enemy without having to face the second at the same time.
- Move onto the next enemy with the same basic approach.
- Locate, aggressive or defensive, isolate and repeat.

Timing

Understanding the theory of how to play out 1vX situations alone is enough, the player must have a keen understanding of the kind of timing each element of his plan or actions must take. Counter-Strike is a time-based game and the amount of a time a player has to work with will define what he can do and as a result what his enemy can do.

The player should aim to move as quickly as he can while keeping the odds highly in his favour and following the steps outlined in the theory section. The exception to this guideline is when the player is trying to keep the enemies moving around, even then though they will often know his location. There will be times when the player cannot stop the enemies from knowing where he is and so must simply make the best of the situation. He may also be faced with occasions where he must put himself at risk in order to open a window of opportunity from which to ultimately win the round.

The player needs to decide upon an objective which he will then stick with, trying to minimize all risks while carrying out that objective. Typically the player will have no time to actually make decisions so he needs to have those ready to be executed. He cannot afford to have less than 100% concentration else his chances of winning in difficult situations like 1v3s become highly unlikely. The player must capitalize upon every mistake his opponents make while not making mistakes himself.



3D vs Lunatic Hai at ESWC 2006 / Rambo's POV

Understanding the context of time on a specific map is important to success also, for example a player must know how long it will take him to silently walk an area like the banana on de_inferno from the middle area. As counter-terrorist the clock can be used to aid the player in that if there is little to no time left he can push into the site he is covering to confirm that the enemies are going to the other site to plant.

When the player is in any part of the map with a general idea of where the enemies are located he should typically want to go to the site with the least amount of enemies in it. Here he can isolate an enemy, kill him and then plant. Now the enemies must come to the player and he has the option of controlling the surroundings. Now his priority should be to get on the defensive so he can control them. In the reversed situation, where the player is a CT, he may be forced to take a risk due to knowing the enemy are going into the bombsite. He may have to flank or get a pick, they know where he is so he needs to simply take action and hit his shots.

It's important for the player to understand the concept of controlling the pace of his opponents in 1vX situations. If he makes a move and kills the first enemy then from here on he can control the tempo since the opposition will have to cover the position previously covered by the eliminated enemy. In these situations the key is isolating the enemy so they have to commit to something fast because they know the player's location and are adjusting to it. If the player rushes to kill an enemy in a 1v3 then the two remaining are going to be forced to play the round extremely safe, so the player has slowed them down.

Anything the player does is a gamble, the key is figuring out which option the player has the best chance of successfully pulling off.

- Move as quickly as you can while keeping your chances of winning high, for example by engaging enemies one at a time if possible.
- Peeking at the right time in a 1vX situation can be a pre-emptive move for getting out of a situation that might get increasingly difficult, so timing is important. Especially you know they don't know where you are.
- There will be times when you can't help the enemies knowing where you are and you just have to make the best of it.
- Sometimes you will have to take a risk to give yourself a chance to win the round.
- Decide upon an objective and stick with it, making sure you keep risks as low as possible while doing that.
- You must be 100% focused and capitalize on every mistake of your enemy's while not making any yourself.
- Learn the amount of time it takes to walk and run through various areas of the maps so you can plan accordingly.
- If you know roughly where the enemies are then try and go to the site with the least in it, kill one then plant. This gives you the opportunity to control the surroundings.
- As CT if the enemies are going into a bombsite and they know where you are you might have to just move quickly and flank or get a pick before getting into a 1v2 situation that you'll have trouble wining.
- Control the pace of your opponents, this might mean rushing to kill one to slow the others down and make them play more defensively.



1uX Examples

The following are examples of in-game situations which occur and the solutions offered by the authors of this guide. The player is advised to look over the premise of each solution, consider his own plan of action and then compare it with that outlined to see where it differs and for what reasons.

Situation 1:

The player is 1v1 as CT and has flanked from inside on de_train to the popdog ladder area. The terrorist is in the alley area and both are aware of the other's rough location.

Solution(s):

The player can simply head out and shoot the enemy. Alternatively he can head back up the ladder to either the terrorist side of middle or CT spawn, thus maintaining the element of surprise. The terrorist is likely to plant at the bomb train outside or try and head inside. The player can cut off the risks involved in not knowing which decision the enemy will make by going back to inner and heading towards the Z halls. If the enemy goes inner then the player is prepared and if the enemy plants outside then the player is flanking him to the bomb train.

Situation 2:

The player has planted the bomb and will have to fight off 2-3 enemies.

Solution(s):

The first thing for the player to do is get an early pick by holding an angle and taking a quick shot. He can then relocate or simply pick a spot where he can watch both angles, so the player is watching both ways and can kill 1-2 and then back up and make the situation a 1v1. Sometimes if the player is aware of the location of one of the enemies he can go and kill him before planting to improve the situation once the bomb is down.

Situation 3:

The player is facing a 1v3 situation as CT, has the bomb, but the enemies are at the site.

Solution(s):

The player essentially is forced to fight the enemies; if he runs away then they will pick up the bomb and plant making it tough to win. Again the player should aim to try and make the situation a 1v1 fight as often as possible. Also before the player kills the bomb planter he shouldn't reveal his position without doing as much damage as possible. Sometimes the player will want to kill the guy covering the planter before the planter so it's then a 1v2 or 1v1. The reasoning behind this is that the bomb planter is often not the number one threat since he is not armed or shooting. It is worth bearing in mind in situations of one versus many that if the player has a 50% chance of wining a 1v2 but a 60% chance of winning 2 1v1 battles then obviously the latter is the better option to pick. This is especially the case since in 1v1 fights the player can take a position advantage on the enemy.

Situation 4:

The enemies have taken over the bomb site and the player must retake it.

Solution(s):

Before the enemies plant the bomb it is important the player moves fast, some-



times that he runs out and peeks without flashing. The player has to push the tempo in such a situation. Again the player should aim to isolate enemies so fights are occurring 1v1, the enemy know the player's location so he must hit his shots. To peek one area of the map the player can flash another. The more time taken by the player the more difficult it becomes to win since the enemies will be better positioned. The player should try and enter as the enemies are planting.

Situation 5:

It's a 1v3 and the enemies are hitting the player's bombsite but are unaware of his presence there.

Solution(s):

The player should try and conceal his spot as much as possible without giving away his position until absolutely necessary.

Situation 6:

The player is 1vX as terrorist as the opposition have killed the bomb carrier.

Solution(s):

The player needs to figure out where the enemies are located; he has time to think about the matter since this is a slow tempo scenario. The player needs to think where the enemies will likely have placed themselves since obviously they will be somewhere surrounding the bomb and covering each other's backs. The player should visualise where the enemies will be and go with that mental picture. It is important to focus on killing the first enemy but with a plan for what to do with whoever is covering him. The player still needs to be aware of



3D vs coL at the WCG USA Finals in 2005 / Rambo's PO\

the possibilities of where the enemies could be, after making a basic assumption and killing an enemy he should adapt.

The player should take his time; once his position is given away he is in trouble so revealing should not take place until it is necessary. In the basic situation outlined the opposition will often move around, so if the player is close then they may change position and leave themselves open. The player needs to take advantage of knowing where the enemies are before they can hide, even if it is a risk. This is due to the fact he will have to kill all the enemies sooner or later regardless.

PREPARATION

Before a big match or practice

The player should always get enough sleep that his performance is not hindered as a result of too much or too little, sleep will also affect his reaction speed. It is important to remember one's role in the strategies which will be used so taking a moment or two to remind oneself before a game/practice begins is helpful. Scouting out the opposition through demos will allow the player more data on which to make informed decisions in-game and from which he can try to anticipate his opponent's moves and tendencies.

Rambo suggests the following:

"Play with a sense of urgency, get your mind in a happy/comfortable and confident mode. Block out everything except your focus on the game and what your team-mates are saying."

Discussing a game plan with the player's team-mates before a game/practice is useful, collectively deciding which strats the team can best execute and which are most likely to bring success against the specific opponent the team will be facing. This kind of preparation ensures the team does not have to think of things to do on the fly.

The player should not play scared; he should focus on playing his game and imposing his will upon the opposition, being the aggressor. This way the player is controlling the pace and making plays. If on the other hand the player approaches the game entirely passively and afraid he will allow the opposition to take the little advantages which arise instead of vice-versa. It is important to know when to take the little risks which will pay off big rewards.

steel says:

"Those are the biggest factors in the game that can be affected most by your pre-game mental state so do everything possible to avoid any of those coming up by preparing yourself properly for big games."

The player should do everything he can to get himself comfortable heading into a game. This may mean getting a pillow to sit on, drinking an energy drink, washing his hands or smoking a cigarette. Whatever he needs to do he should aim to do to put himself in his optimal state of comfort and confidence, every player has his own pre-game ritual.

PHYSICAL PREPARATION

Just as before a race runners will stretch their legs so gamers should prepare themselves physically for the task ahead.

As Rambo explains:

"I like to stretch my entire arm, forearm, wrist, fingers and loosen up all the muscles so they're not tense. It's good to just stretch your whole body, wake yourself up and get the blood pumping everywhere. Take deep breaths to relax you and calm yourself down." The player should aim to play with energy but not to the extent he is nervous. Making sure his mouse, mousepad and hands are clean can set the player at ease as well. Having a battle cry can help the player get ready for a game, exercising his voice to make calls at the required level and offer motivational comments to his team in-game when spirits need lifting. The player will be engaged in a lot of neck movement so looking left and right prior to a game to get ready for looking at his team-mate's screens can help. It is important for the player to replicate every element of his stance as accurately as possible.

The player should ensure his sensitivity is tweaked to the right setting. This can be done by practicing flicking between different target areas on a map until the player feels comfortable he has found the appropriate setting. The player should also check his movement when peeking round corners as though the match were live to double check his adjustments are accurate.

Rambo also suggests:

"Another good technique is at home people will line them self up in a part of a map then slide their mouse across their mousepad and remember exactly how much rotation is made."

The aim is to be as fresh and alert as possible so considerations must be made to the intake of energy drinks and food. Some players may play better when hungry while some will suffer performance dips if they have consumed a large meal prior to playing. If it is early in the morning then the player should eat breakfast so if he ends up having to play a lot of matches in a row he is adequately fuelled. When it comes to eating it is often best to eat light to avoid the problems mentioned previously.

Preparing mentally

The player should try and put himself in his opponent's shoes and try and anticipate what the enemy will do based on what he would do in each situation, often he will be able to make a reasonable guess. The player should always be prepared for the worst thing an enemy could do in any given situation, that way even if the enemy does not go on to perform such an action the player is fully prepared regardless. Many of these elements come down to experience and in-game awareness.

Rambo offers an example of preparing for the worst:

"You're CT on de_train, last alive versus 1 guy with bomb. You're upper site; he could be alley or middle. Instead of gambling on which site he is going, just sit in Z, or in the middle and wait for him to make a move."

Knowing how to play by instinct is effective in such situations. When the player knows where his opponent is and where he is in relation he can instinctually know where to manoeuvre himself to react to or engage in plays.

Summary:

- Always get enough sleep, not too much or too little. This will affect your reaction speed.
- Take a moment before a game starts to think about your role in the strategies and what you're expected to do.
- By scouting out opponents through demos you can learn their strategies and tendencies giving you more information to use in anticipating them.
- Play with a sense of urgency and confidence. Focus only on the game and what your team-mates are saying.
- It is useful to discuss a game plan with your team before a game so everyone knows which strats are best to run against the opposition.
- Don't play scared, focus on your game and impose your will on the enemy making yourself the aggressor.
- If you play too passively or scared your opponent will take all the little advantages that arise in a game.
- Know when to take the small risks that pay off big rewards.
- Do whatever you need to before a game to get comfortable.
- Stretch and loosen up your muscles before playing, get the blood flowing.
- Make sure your equipment and hands

are clean.

- Check you have the right sensitivity value by testing your aim and movements in the server pre-game and making the kinds of moves and flicks you would in a real game.
- Monitor your food and drink intake so it doesn't adversely affect your play one way or the other.
- Put yourself in your opponent's shoes to think what he might do in any scenario.
- Always be prepared for the worst thing an enemy can do at any time.
- · Learn to play instinctively.

RAMBO'S CHECKLIST



Click to hear Rambo's preparation checklist for tournaments.

Practice techniques

Finding or adjusting sensitivity

There are two tests Rambo likes to perform when warming up. The first is for his flick aim and then the second his drag aim; the videos show examples of each. Flicking has him choosing random targets to aim at while he practices dragging by revealing angles as he clears them.



Movement and map angles

Manoeuvring the map is easily practiced by playing alone, this way the player has freedom to roam and practice the map with no distractions. The video shows Rambo rushing cat, and how any play can be practiced alone. An example would be rushing somewhere, or taking over an area. The concept is similar to shooting free throws in basketball, repetition of moving around a map and certain angles will make it easier in the future.

Grenades

Experiment and use a common sense approach to Counter-Strike physics and angles to achieve your target grenade explosion.



SELF-ANALYSIS/IMPROUEMENT

The Greek aphorism "Know thyself" has been attributed to such ancient thinkers as Heraclitus, Socrates and Pythagoras as well as being inscribed on the forecourt of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi. This saying urges the individual to exercise the quality which makes Homo sapiens unique amongst the organisms of Earth: that of self-reflection. By looking at one's actions the individual is able to alter and improve the only area of life he truly has complete control over, namely himself. This concept may seem overly philosophical to the low level Counter-Strike player but when understood in the context of competitive play it is perhaps the most important principle for self-improvement available.

Demos and demo watching

The player should make demos of himself playing and watch these later so he can make a note of where he makes poor decisions or where a better option is available in hindsight but had not been considered at the time. The player can study for weakness in his game and where he can improve that element which is letting him down in any given situation.

As Rambo says:

"You notice a lot of things you wouldn't when you're playing live. Being able to focus on your game play with a demo afterwards, is a perfect way to critique yourself."

As well as the player watching his own play in demos it can be useful for him to observe the play of better players through demos of them in matches. From there he can apply ideas and solutions he has seen to his own game to see what fits.

Rambo explains:

"A demo can always provide some quick fixes for strategy. Why spend time trying to create brand new strategies, when you can just rip ones from professional teams. Example: If you are having problems holding your position, watch different demos of top professionals that hold your position."

steel is quick to add:

"At the same time you have to be capable of distinguishing between what is outside of your scope of possibility and adapt the pro player's strategy to your abilities. For example someone watching a corner with a really tight angle has to have really good aim so you can't directly mimic what a pro player does in that situation."

It is also important to understand that simply because a pro player dies in a given situation in a demo does not mean he made the wrong decision or play and that it should be ignored or disregarded. It is also vital not to get caught up in the entertainment factor of being awed by big frag rounds or exciting sequences, the object is to learn and this involves conscious observation as opposed to simply sitting back and watching for the sake of fun. The simplest things to pick up from demos are how to play certain spots, where to throw a flash to stop a rush etc. Instead of spending hours perfecting a specific flashbang the same understanding can be acquired by watching a professional level team who have that particular move perfected.

Guidelines

The player will always be analysing more in-game when he is losing or making mistakes because these are the critical situations in which he must focus and expand his experience in order to improve. Learn to keep poise and composure in the face of frustration. If the player has said to himself 'what is the best thing I can do in this situation' and dies anyway then it's possible there may have been nothing he could do differently and he made the right decision regardless of the result. Lesser plays may think they are making the right decisions and not be so a good guideline is to stick with what works in the long term and when something no longer works to change it. If the player practices enough then he will gain an understanding of which positions work a large percent of the time and which only work 50% or less and need to be analysed further. Experience should feed into analysis so it becomes a system of error-checking.

steel explains the necessity of frustration at times:

"Embrace frustration because it means something may not be correct so you need to improve whatever that is."

- Get to know yourself as player so you can figure out what you're doing wrong which needs to be changed.
- Watch demos of yourself playing as you will pick up on things you didn't in the heat of the moment.
- Watch demos of pro players to pick up tips on where to play spots, where to throw flashes etc.
- Don't get caught up in watching frags; be learning from demos you watch.
- You can take information which would take a long time to figure out without demos by watching top teams and players executing well.
- The more you're making mistakes or losing the more you need to be looking at what is wrong with your game and where you can improve.
- Embrace frustration since it is often a sign you need to change something.
- Use what works in the long run and change it when it stops working.

BEATING AWPERS WITH RIFLES

Due to the one shot one kill potential the AWP offers as a weapon the player should alter his strategy when facing a user of the weapon. This can mean simply altering levels of aggression at certain map locations or adapting an entirely different method of attack. What is to be understood from this section is that different problems require different solutions and so it does the player good to reconsider his options when different options are available.

Use of equipment

The unlikelihood of purely out-shooting an opponent with a potentially one shot one kill weapon means the player should consider the use of items from the equipment menu in aiding advancement in areas where AWPers are known to play. He grenades, flashbangs and smoke grenades can all be thrown with the aim of attempting to make the AWPer miss when the player steps out into the open. The effectiveness of any of these options will depend greatly upon the angle chosen by the AWPer and at which the player must emerge. Smoke grenades should often be considered the first option as they allow cover from which a player can either hope to shoot the retreating AWPer or follow up with flashbang usage. Flashbangs can be used purely to force the AWPer to retreat or reposition, allowing time for the player to emerge from the covered position.



3D vs TEC during CAL-Invite season nine / steel's POV

As Rambo puts it:

"Sometimes you can just throw a flash so he backs off the angle just long enough for you to get out"



steel adds:

"General grenade usage is good, the objective being usually to make him miss a shot"

Insurance shots

The basic concept of insurance shots is once the AWPer has been forced to retreat or is in the act of repositioning behind a wall the player makes informed guesses based on the AWPer's last position in shooting the wall. The aim is both to injure the AWPer outright, to possibly force him to fall back entirely if he is hurt or to slow him down so that he cannot escape or step out to take another shot without risking death.

Rambo offers this piece of aduice to consider:

"While taking insurance shots you don't want to advance against an AWPer in a long walking situation"

Overall strategy

Taking into account the specifics of grenade usage and insurance shooting the pieces can be put together into an overall strategy for facing AWP users with rifles. The AWPer has three distinct advantages which are counteracted by the strategy outlined here. His advantages are his position, the distance his weapon can cover and the one shot one kill nature his weapon possesses. The first objective is to make the AWPer

lose his position, which can be done either with grenade usage as listed above, peeking and taking a quick shot to force a missed/panicked shot or simply using evasive movement to make the first shot as difficult as possible and therefore less likely to be a hit. The next objective is to remove the advantage distance offers the AWPer by closing the distance between the player and him. This can be aided by flashbang usage and insurance shots. From the point the AWPer has been forced to miss, reposition or retreat the player should be constantly moving to avoid predictability before the AWPer can be killed or take another shot

Rambo puts the last point as follows:

"You never want to stay still when facing an AWPer unless you have total confidence in your first shot/reaction speed. Being sporadic with your movement and constantly switching direction while advancing is key"

- Use smokes to provide cover, from which flashbangs can then also be used.
- Flashbangs can be used purely to force the AWPer to lose position.
- Taking insurance shots slows down an AWPer from repositioning and taking a second shot, may force him to retreat entirely and obviously outright damages him.
- Quick peeking and shooting can force an AWPer into firing a missed/panicked shot.
- Evasive movement can be employed to exit a choke point or covered position with the hopes of making the AWPers first shot as difficult as possible.
- Remember the basic strategy: make the AWPer lose his position, close the distance, always be moving/advancing and taking shots.

COPING WITH FRUSTRATION/POOR PLAY

When affairs are going according to plan Counter-Strike as most things in life can seem a simple matter and one merely continues to do what one has done in the past. When difficulties arise, however, figuring out the next move can be troublesome for even the most seasoned players. Learning to cope with frustration or poor performance, perhaps both one as the result of another, is key to succeeding on any level in Counter-Strike in the long-term. Everyone goes through rough patches as a person and dips in performance as a player, dealing with them and coming through the other side is the only area entirely under one's control.

Rambo offers a solution to the situation in the most simple yet effective of terms:

"Don't be a sissy, man up. Just get over it"

That may seem a rather blunt and perhaps glib statement to consider for one who is undergoing problems in their CS game internally or externally but there is wisdom within its parts when properly considered. The first part is essentially a call to stop feeling sorry for oneself and wallowing in self-pity, such a state contributes nothing to improving matters. From "man up" one can take that it is important to regain one's confidence in order to elevate the rest of one's game to the appropriate level one is accustomed to. There are various methods for achieving this end which will be listed fur-

ther below. The latter part essentially encapsulates all that has been discussed in this paragraph succinctly: the first key to overcoming frustration and poor play is "get over it", that is to place negative aspects in the past and move on to a more productive period with a fresh and positive mindset.

Regain composure

The simplest first step to counteracting frustration or poor play is to stabilize both the mental and physical aspects of oneself. This can mean taking a breather from playing or getting a glass of water, thus allowing the body to recover while the mind has a period of time within which to become calm. A key problem with frustration is it is often expressed through anger, whether at oneself, one's teammates or the opposition. Needless to say this is not productive and so anything which allows one a moment away from the object of frustration is a good initial step to take.

Talk about it

Frustration or poor play sometimes arises from getting caught within a loop of actions, each ending with similar results each time. Talking about it to friends or team-mates can help not only give direct feedback on the aspects of one's play which might need tweaking but also allow the player a sounding board from which to figure out one's problem areas. If a team issue is the source of problems then a team meeting can be beneficial, giving the team time to nip a problem in the bud before it develops into something worse or further impedes the progress of the unit. As far as discussing past mistakes an important point to consider is to frame changes that need to be made in the context of future games, this allows issues of hurt feelings or blame to be sidestepped.



As Rambo explains with the use of repetition for emphasis:

"Talk about the next match and forget what happened... because it happened. Just focus on the next match. It's a team effort to cope with frustration and that starts with each individual, so don't dwell or bring it up anymore just focus on the next match"

Reacting to failure or mistakes

It is important for all levels of players to understand the difference between a mistake which ends up in a lost round and a situation where the player makes the correct decisions and does the right thing but still loses. If one has practiced significantly, learned the aspects of the strategy system the team runs and executes as planned but the result is still a loss then there are times when there is little point dwelling on the past or blaming oneself. At that point the only thing to consider is how a future action can be modified to potentially reap success in similar circumstances.

steel explains this matter like so:

"If you're giving 100% and you know that then when you die you can't be mad because you gave it your all. When dead I usually think about how to avoid it happening again and what I'm gonna do next round/next time"

Naturally not all levels of player have the confidence of someone like steel where they know their actions were the best they could do that in that specific situation at that time, for the players requiring more improvement out there he offers this extra thought:

"I always looked at what others did in all situations, like when I was dead I usually would spectate people and always think of how to play it out 5 seconds before them and see if it matched and why not"

It is also important to understand that failure can be a path to progress in one's game. Regardless of the opposition one is facing and expectations relating to whether one should beat them or not as long as the player is continually re-evaluating his actions and learning from his mistakes then the affair can be said to have been a learning experience.

In the matter of frustration and its mental effects Rambo makes these points clear:

"It's just mainly up to person himself, how strong mentally he is in not allowing himself to collapse and instead regrouping his thoughts. People who try harder and allow pressure to get to them are more vulnerable to frustration but a worry free player or confident one will get past it faster. It's really important the strat caller blocks frustration out the most, he is the heart of the team and any sense of frustration or doubt in the strat caller will radiate out to his team-mates"

- "Man up and get over" frustration or poor play.
- Regain your composure, a drink of water or a simple breather can go towards this.
- Talk about the problems you are facing, especially with your teammates so you can all work through them together.
- Try and frame problems in the context of the future, putting the past behind oneself but looking towards how one will act in a similar situation in the future, be that next round or next match.
- Don't blame yourself unduly when you fall short after giving it 100% and doing what seemed to be the right thing.
- Spectate other players while dead so you can test out your decision making abilities and see how they match up to successful or unsuccessful events playing out in front of you.

CRITICISM/CHASTISEMENT

Reacting to criticism/chastisement

Every team is made up of different types of players as well as players who are at different skill levels. For players of every level of competition there are going to be situations where they are faced with criticism or even chastisement from their team-mates based on actions taken within the game or their approach to a certain situation. How the player handles such situations not only affects how his team continues develop and improve but also potentially how long he stays in such a team and if his individual game improves. Finding the right approach to criticism/chastisement will alleviate a lot of potential problems which can arise and help the player improve faster than may otherwise be the case based on the impetus of his own reflections.

When team-mates criticise an area of the player's game it is advisable for the player to consider the points made but after the practice or match. This allows time to reflect upon how valid the criticisms are and whether to ignore them or incorporate them into how he approaches that element of the game.

steel adds:

"Usually in anything that counts you aren't going to be criticized by your team that you've practiced with for several months. For scrims, and practice as well, it's best to play it out then think about it afterward or when you're dead but keep a game plan"

Something to consider on the topic of criticism is how it fits into the basic theory of improvement: playing with better players and against them. In that light it is worth considering that if a better player offers criticism there may be some value in taking it on board.

Rambo makes that point:

"If you are playing with better players or someone better or with more experience is telling you something, take his input without being offended. Be embracive about it"

Thinking about criticism after the match also allows the player to judge the mind state of his team-mate when the criticism was given. There will be situations where there may not be anything the player can improve and the remarks were made out of frustration on the part of the team-mate, possibly even at his own play. The basic approach to this area of being involved in a team can best be outlined as: stay humble and be mature. Reacting too emotionally will only lead to frustration.

Approaching players to critique them

Just as the way a player reacts to criticism impacts his relationships with other players and the way he and his team will progress so it is important to understand the correct way to approach other players with criticism for them.

It is important that the player knows the personnel on his team, who they are and how they react. If a player is new/upcoming and is unwilling to listen to criticism then they probably should not be on the player's team. Players who can't accept criticism aren't going to be good for a team in the long run. Critiquing players in practice can be an appropriate time as if they are receptive then they may remember a particular point or example for the next time they are in a similar situation. In this scenario the player's team can be improved piece by piece.

In a big match/tournament situation the player can give motivational information to try and cover small issues. The player should aim to try and cover the issue without being specific to the person at fault since in a big match situation the player doesn't want his team-mates second guessing themselves or having fingers pointed at them.

Rambo elaborates:

"Say one round you did a technical strat which required flash/nades and it goes wrong. Next time you run it again and you say 'let's run it like we practiced, throw our stuff where it's meant to go"

- Listen to criticism but wait until the situation has passed to consider the value of it.
- · Stay humble and be mature.
- · Don't react too emotionally.
- Your team should be made up of players who are willing to take criticism on board.
- Practice is a good time to offer criticism since it allows the player to remember some advice for a similar situation in the future.
- In a big match or tournament situation don't make criticism too specific or your team-mates might hesitate or feel like they are being picked on.

Instinctive play versus consciously thought out play

Due to the emphasis placed upon reflection and reevaluation of one's play in this guide the player may be under the impression that at all times one's mind should be racing with thoughts relating to the game. This is not the case and it is vital each player understands the situations where conscious thought out play is required and those in which one must act entirely upon instinct. To aid understanding of the principles which govern each style of play a number of external quotes have been included, meditating upon the message behind each should reap rewards for those who are in the process of adapting their play to conform to these guidelines.

Hesitation is the enemy

Counter-Strike is a game in which many key moments come down to making fast judgements that are usually based upon prior experience. In these situations the player should ideally make these judgements at lightning quick speed and the best to achieve that is for there to be no conscious thought involved.

As steel lays it out:

"When you've mastered all the concepts like bomb delay, corner peeks etc you never really pay attention to them, instead concentrating on observation" There are moments when it benefits the player to be thinking consciously about the round or the situations he is likely to face. At the beginning of a round during the freeze time is such a case and as a result is when strategies are often discussed. When the time for action is at hand though one cannot afford to hesitate and engage in conscious thought.

steel puts it most directly when he says:

"Hesitation is the big enemy, any action is better than inaction in many situations"

Just as in sports like Ice Hockey or Soccer a goal keeper cannot consciously engage his mind when attempting saves, instead having to instantaneously react, so successful Counter-Strike players master the ability to act entirely on instinct. Once actions have been drilled into the subconscious through dedicated practice attempting to engage them through conscious thought only delays the process in Counter-Strike's most key situations. What has been practiced needs no conscious thought, it is known at the most fundamental level of the player and so can be called up when needed through instinct. This is how experience and practice feeds into refining the instincts of the player.

To drive this point home a useful quote to remember is the following by German philosopher Eugen Herrigel whose researches into Zen mirror the kinds of principles outlined in this section:

"The archer hits the target without having aimed"

For the player who is lacking a wealth of experience at the highest competitive levels it may seem difficult to differentiate exactly when one should be thinking about the game and when one should simply be reacting and drawing upon experience through instinctual play.

Rambo's comments should cast some light upon the matter:

"It's situational; sometimes you are hit instantly with a quick thinking situation where you HAVE to go with your instinct. That's all your experience filtering out the best possible situations and then picking the best one in a second but sometimes you have some time to think about what to do. It's usually best to just go with your first instinct until something significant interferes or arises"

Thoughts must be organized

The player who has mastered the ability to act instinctually in the correct situations for it must then ensure his time spent thinking is used most effectively in order to get the best of both worlds in this area

steel explains the point:

"When you get to a more advanced and experienced stage you want to have your conscious thoughts organised and prioritized. For example you need to stay aware of player positions as you are

thinking of the next moves to make while staying completely safe, watching the clock etc. All these need to be prioritized in the right order depending on the situation for your thought-flow to go uninterrupted and get past the situation as fast as possible to be able to act quickly and minimize the need for conscious thought-out playing which is slower-paced and less intuitive"

Rambo adds.

"The best players are planning out what they are doing 3 steps ahead and if something happens that interferes their instinct kicks in and then they plan accordingly, a few steps ahead"

It may prove useful for improving players to bear in mind another external quote, this time from Sun Tzu's legendary "Art of War":

"The general who wins the battle makes many calculations in his temple before the battle is fought. The general who loses makes but few calculations beforehand"

The importance of experience

In many of the quotes above one sees mention of instinct and experience, especially in relation to filtering thoughts and making split second decisions. It is worthwhile to discuss these concepts further and make the matter clearer.

steel explains the basic principle:

"Experience will let you easily filter through what needs conscious thought and what can be put in the background of your mind and instinctively taken care of. Experience will teach your mind which things are important and need immediate attention etc"

Rambo makes a similar point more simply:

"Experience is just how good your filter is and how fast it works"

With experience the player will know what he should be thinking about in a given situation and what to consider in the next situation if specific criteria are met which alter the requirements. Here experience allows the player to automate filtering through possible factors for the best ones so conscious thought is not necessary in situations what cannot allow for it.

Not all situations require the player to eschew conscious thought; a simple example would be when engaging in a 1vX situation. Such a scenario requires a delicate mix of experience for the simple things and conscious thought for creating a schedule or pattern of action which the player will embark upon.

Building experience

After stressing the importance and usefulness of experience in this matter it is important to explain to the player how to go about gaining more experience and more importantly the right kind of experience.

The most obvious step towards building up experience is dedicating oneself to playing Counter-Strike, regularly and often. Beyond that it is important to ensure one is playing with and against superior players. Doing so puts the player in tougher situations and allows him opportunities to learn from how better players handle tougher situations also.

As one is practicing one should reflect upon mistakes made and the other potential solutions which could have been applied to achieve success in each situation. Where this ties into the points made earlier about instinctual play is that the player should follow his instinct and put his confidence in it but then when it fails him he can consider where it went wrong and practice a more successful pattern of actions in future situations. Doing so will enable the player's instincts to react correctly at a later date when they are called upon in a similar situation.

Rambo sums that up as follows:

"When you play and your first instincts are kicking in it's usually what you are most comfortable with so just start by going with your instincts and playing confidently with those instincts. As you get better your filter will too."

- Counter-Strike contains situations in which conscious thought is a hindrance.
- In these situations your instinct should be relied upon to achieve success.
- When you are hit with a situation which requires instant action engaging conscious thought will only slow matters down.
- · Hesitation is the enemy.
- You should practice the correct solutions to problems over and over so that when a situation arises in a real game instinct can take over and there is no delay.
- In the spawn during the freeze time is a situation where you can think about the upcoming round.
- In a 1vX scenario you must mix instinctual play covering the more basic elements with conscious thought in designing a pattern of action for winning the round.
- Experience allows you to instantly filter out of the potential actions the correct one for a situation.

- Experience can be accumulated by playing with and against better players than you and watching how they handle situations.
- Trust your instinct and put your full confidence in it during games.
- When your instincts fail you figure out where you went wrong and practice that scenario over and over so that in the next real game situation instinct can take over but with the right results this time.
- As you improve and gain experience your filter will improve also.

MINDSET PRE-GAME

Whether the player is going into a typical league match, a LAN match or facing off against a top team in a major event it is vital to understand the right mindset to place oneself in before the match gets underway. Knowing how to get into the right frame of mind will ensure the only factor which affects the outcome will be how well the player can perform. This is not an exact science; players spanning all levels of competition have different ways of dealing with the problem and with varying degrees of success. That is not to say there aren't quite specific quidelines which when followed can help the player develop the right approach to setting his pre-game mindset. The following methods are those employed by players who have won the biggest events in the CS world and withstood pressure countless times by first getting into the right frame of mind pre-game to allow them to perform at the peak of their abilities in the match itself.

Setup correctly

Ensuring one's setup is as it should be is a good way of negating any potential problems that can arise in-game which will affect the player's mindset or throw him off his game. By detailing the nature of his home setup and replicating it pre-game in a LAN environment the player ensures no technical issues will plague his performance so his mouse cord won't suddenly become stuck somewhere unexpected and he will be able to

see into a specific vent due to setting his gamma to the correct level. By taking care of all the little things like these the player not only prevents problems occurring later on but also removes all worries surrounding the matter from his mind, freeing his mental capacities to focus entirely upon his own game.

Mental state

Taking care of one's physical condition may seem obvious to most competitors in the form of drinking enough fluids or getting enough sleep but keeping one's mental state in check is less well understood as an important part of going into a match. Worries about a previous performance or facing talented opposition or the pressure of a specific match can weigh upon the minds of players and throughout the history of CS players have taken different approaches to dealing with such thoughts. Some would advocate overcoming such worries by psyching oneself up, believing one is better than their opponent, and even in some extreme cases hating one's opponent. These approaches may work for some players but neither steel nor Rambo endorses them. Their approaches revolve around stilling the minds so over-thinking and worrying are no longer problems.

steel sets the concept out like this:

"Usually the best thing is just blankness because when you're most concentrated your thinking is completely void. Everything is completely automated"

By taking care of the physical aspects such as hunger/thirst and the setup related issues such as mousepad placement or sensitivity all that is left is the mental state of the player. Taking steel's advice and quieting the conscious mind, preparing to act and play instinctually, the player need no longer concern himself with any of the myriad of external thoughts or worries or pressures which could

otherwise hamper his performance. Problems are solved or overcome in practice, when a real match arrives there is no longer anything to be gained by agonizing over them.

steel's adds along those lines:

"If it's not completely automated it means you haven't practiced enough or are too inexperienced. If I know everything is set perfectly and I'm feeling well with the setup the only limiting factor is gonna be how I play in the game"

Rambo gives an inspiring speech regarding his take on the matter:

"Just get as comfortable as you can is what it comes down to. I like to take deep breaths and calm myself down, it helps with the nervousness and butterflies. Think positive and optimistic don't play scared. Play with a sense of urgency, but don't play panicky. Play with heart and intensity, you want to impose your will and control the pace. Don't second guess yourself ever, play the way you normally always play and play by instinct"

- Get your setup as similar as you can to the one you use at home.
- Blank out worries or pressure from your mind.
- Play instinctually and without hesitation.
- Taking care of your setup and clearing your mental state leaves only your actual in-game performance as the limiting factor on success.
- Get as comfortable as possible and play without fear.

PRACTICING

Despite being a team-orientated game a lot of emphasis in the Counter-Strike community is placed upon the individual's practicing methods. The way one goes about practicing is largely a very subjective matter which relies upon the player doing certain things to maintain a level of performance and then knowing which areas of his game are weaknesses and require additional work. This is all something each player must decide for himself in designing a practice schedule. Here are some more general points to consider regarding practice that apply to everyone.

Playing with a team

When it comes to practicing with one's team it is always best to make such practice as consistent and regular as possible. It is always preferable to be playing less time but on a more regular basis than a lot of time but sporadically.

steel makes that very point more specifically:

"It's best to play less per day but regularly than play 10 hours a day every 2 days"

Pugs (pickup games)

Playing pugs can be a good way to practice match situations at times when playing with a real team is not an option. It is important though that one's approach

to pugs is carefully considered. Simply playing a large number of them without thinking can adversely affect and shape the player's approach and style of play. It is key that the player on entering a pug disassociates himself from the prevalent baiting style of play which is observed in such an environment. To engage in that kind of play is to run the risk of developing bad habits which can spill over into one's play with real teams.

Aim maps and CSDM (DeathMatch)

steel explains the positives and negatives:

"Aim maps and CSDM are a decent way to warm up your aim but both can be counter-productive if used to actually improve because you get into a limited set of situations and types of shooting that don't necessarily represent actual CS match gameplay"

- Playing with your team regularly and for less time is more beneficial than playing irregularly but a lot.
- Pugs can allow match practice provided you don't adopt the baiting style of play you will encounter there.
- Aim maps and CSDM can warm up your aim but may not help improve it since the situations you face are not directly relatable to real match situations.

THREAT ANALYSIS

Threat analysis is the approach the player takes to deciding and prioritizing the potential threat of specific opponents and as a result is a key factor in formulating a game plan to play out a specific situation or round. If the player is peeking out on multiple enemies it is vital to realize which enemy is responsible for covering the area where the player is emerging from. Naturally that enemy will be the most attentive to one's exit. In general it is most effective to target players chronologically, in the order the player will be forced to face them. The enemy who sees the player for the longest has the most time to aim at him.

Use the map to help eliminate multiple opponents

When facing more than one enemy it is wise to consider how the environment of the map itself can be used to increase the likelihood of eliminating the opposition. So in a 1v2 situation a player can slow one of the opposition down by moving around the map, thus creating time and a situation where he can face the other enemy alone. It is also worthwhile to maintain a secondary plan so that in the event the player kills one of the enemies he has an escape route or somewhere to hide to reload for example before having to face the other.



3D vs Gamers.nu at CPL Summer 2004 / steel's POV

steel lays out his thought process:

"In a 2v1 situation I'll try to slow one down as much as possible using the map and get rid of the other one while simultaneously keeping the other one running after me"

Factors to consider

Certain positions are more threatening than others or certain situations may be tougher to win than others. These points must be considered when making a plan of action to play out. Whether or not the player has the bomb or the bomb down somewhere plays an important part in how he is best advised to act to be more likely to win the round. Where the player chooses to plant the bomb as a terrorist will affect how he can defend it from the Counter-Terrorists and the degree to which he must take chances or put himself in danger. The player will be more vulnerable in certain spots on the map and so must prioritize those areas in his focus.

- When you are peeking out onto multiple enemies prioritize the one who is most likely to have seen you and for the longest.
- Usually it is most effective to prioritize enemies according to which you will meet first.
- In situations where the numbers are not in your favour you can increase your chances of winning by using the map to cut enemies off from each other so you can take care of them one by one.
- Keep a 'plan b' in mind for after you take care of the first enemy so you can hide or reload before facing the other(s)
- Certain positions are more dangerous to you than others and require more focus as a result.
- Factors to bear in mind: specific positions and their vulnerability, whether you have the bomb, where exactly you are planting etc

CHEATING AND CHEATERS

The ever increasing complexity of cheats and the numerous varieties of exploiting aspects of Counter-Strike to get an unfair advantage coupled with the relatively slow moving progress of anti-cheat solutions means cheating has and for the foreseeable future remains a much talked about topic. How the player deals with cheating, cheaters themselves or accusations of cheating from opponents can have as great an impact on the path of his CS career as his in-game etiquette or his ability to network with other players.

The first and most basic point to consider about cheating is that one can rarely be absolutely certain one has been cheated. This may seem obvious to some players but this point should always be held in mind when engaging in any discussion or dispute over alleged cheating.

Proof is required

Unless the player has amassed evidence, in the form of demos for example, which show beyond a reasonable doubt the likelihood of cheating having taken place the most advisable course of action is always to remain civil and avoid causing uproar. Making baseless accusations will only escalate a situation and potentially bring the player's entire team's opinion into the matter

as opposed to merely his own individual opinion. The repercussions of such a scenario are that if the player is shown not to have cheated or it is proven to be highly unlikely then the player has jeopardised his entire team's reputation as well as his own.

It is certainly unwise to bring up accusations of cheating to the opponent in question as such behaviour can often create strong rivalries or worse between teams and players. Often a cheating accusation that turns into a rivalry between two teams will end with one of the teams ultimately being discredited in the public eye. Even if evidence has been accumulated the correct course of action is always referring to it people in positions of authority to do something about it such as league officials.

Cheating teams, online and offline

When it comes to teams who are potentially harbouring cheaters it is important to differentiate between online and LAN results. Teams with cheaters amongst their ranks will often die out of their own accord, not least as significant online performances compared against radically poorer LAN performances carry their own implication of illegitimacy. Unless the cheating players are talented without the use of cheats their LAN performances are unlikely to match up to the standard they have set online.

steel outlines a similar point:

"A team which does very well online has next to no reason not to at least attempt offline events and tournaments, so a very strong online team which seems to have timidity in showing up at LANs are often seen as suspect." Likewise teams who attend offline events regularly and have demonstrated similar ability offline as online are far more difficult to discredit. This makes the most effective way to establish a solid reputation to start offline, working one's way up before transferring into the online world of competition.

It is important to bear in mind that while a LAN environment on paper may be considered the ideal environment for some skilled online players this may not be the case. The difference between their home setup and the LAN environment they must compete in may be drastically different enough for them that it negatively affects their play. As a result using a player's LAN performance as an absolute gauge of their ability is not always wise.

Objectivity is to be maintained in favour of subjectivity

It is important that team-mates are viewed with the same level of uncertainty pertaining to cheating as opponents, similarly players who are friendly with the team or player. Maintaining objectivity in this area protects the player from unwittingly becoming associated with and identified with cheaters or cheating in general.

The history of Counter-Strike has shown that anyone can prove to be a cheater; as a result the act of another player 'vouching' for them is of little real value. The typical public opinion regarding a player is rarely in

line with the legality of said player so it is important to maintain a critical eye for everyone and form one's own opinions. It is unwise to base one's opinions on those of the opponents or team-mates of the accused.

A phenomenon that can be observed regularly is the instant discrediting of anyone who is especially able to perform online. This is not an automatic sign of cheating as the nature of competitive Counter-Strike means a number of talented players will begin playing competitively online out of circumstance, only later transitioning into offline play.

steel makes this relevant point regarding the play of one's opposition in relation to cheating:

"During the heat of a match your perception will be skewed as to the abilities of your opponent compared to your own"

Many of the top players in the history of North American CS have endured a phase where they've been repeatedly levelled with accusations of cheating but were later redeemed thanks to their eventual LAN performance. This was the case for steel himself earlier in his career. This highlights how popular opinion can disregard the truth of a player's legitimacy until forcefully proven incorrect

Dealing with cheaters

Due to the volatility and complete uncertainty of the number of factors brought to the table when considering the legitimacy of a specific player or team it is always advisable to abstain from pointing fingers or engaging in witch hunts. The best course of action is to focus upon one's own play, ensuring it is legitimate, and keeping an eye on one's team-mates. Cheaters usually cheat to compensate for some inadequacy in their own game so studying those areas and trying to combat them is the most effective strategy for dealing with cheaters in-game.

From Rambo and steel's personal experience there has usually only been 3-4 cheaters in the entirety of CAL-in-vite at any one time.

Taking the initiative against cheaters amongst one's team should be done initially with the utmost discretion and then if it is concluded the player in question is undeniably cheating strong action should be taken so that the reputation of the team is not deteriorated publicly through tolerating cheaters. There are often two paths taken by teams who find they harbour cheating players: either they ride the success as much as possible until forced to take action or they immediately purge themselves of the cheating players. The latter is naturally the most advisable since it increases the credibility of the team amongst its peers.

- · You can rarely be absolutely certain someone is cheating.
- If you suspect cheating do not raise alarm until evidence has been gathered to establish proof.
- Bring accusations and proof of cheating to authority figures such as admins or league officials, not the players you are accusing.
- The difference between online and offline performances is a better position to gauge legitimacy than merely online alone.
- Remember some players who show considerable online ability have difficulty adapting to LAN play.
- Watch your team-mates with the same uncertainty regarding cheating as you do your opponents.
- Don't base your opinions on a player's legitimacy on public opinions or those of his team-mates or opponents.
- Remember a number of good players began competing online before attending LAN events and proving themselves legitimate.
- Take steps to remove potential cheaters from your team as soon as you have enough reason to be certain they are competing unfairly. This will stop your entire team sharing the poor reputation the cheater will quickly develop.

Dealing with managers

There are so many external aspects to competitive Counter-Strike now that the lines between manager, owner and spokesperson have blurred considerably. It is important that players understand the kind of relationship they need to maintain with their manager and the approach they must take to playing under one and allowing one to deal with the various financial or administrative elements of the team.

Figure out how involved the manager should be

The key to dealing with managers is to properly gauge the degree of integration to allow the person in charge of the team's management. The players need to assert their own identity as a team and not allow the manager to do all the work; the more involved he is with all aspects of the team the more distanced the players are from the inner workings of the team.

steel offers this sage aduice:

"For a younger or fresher team it's preferable to keep a degree of control over operations so as to not let the manager effectively own the team"

Management is often a team effort and will be highly subjective to the personalities involved but a team concerned with its well being would do well to always take part in the manager's activities, even if this is only from the standpoint of overseeing what has been done.

Maintain a relationship to avoid friction

It is important for the player to create and maintain a friendly working rapport with the manager of his team as any friction will only increasingly hurt the team down the road (as can be observed with any number of teams) Preferably the person selected to oversee management of the team should be a real world acquaintance as this makes it easier for the players to check up with them and also decreases the likelihood of any underhanded behaviour on the part of the manager. Likewise unless someone has past experience or trustworthy references one should not hand over management of one's team or organization to an online-only acquaintance.

Network with other managers

From an individual standpoint it is worthwhile making connections with other teams' managers and building rapport with them so further options are opened up down the road for the player. This can mean simply playing pickup games with said managers to enhance camaraderie and confer potential consideration for future teams. Making even minor steps such as these can be rewarding in unforeseen ways in the future. The volatile nature of the competitive Counter-Strike scene means with the sudden shifts that can take place within teams links to managers can be vital for a player's survival at a specific level of competition.

Caution should still be employed when forging and maintaining relationships with one's own managers as an overly friendly rapport might lead to preferential treatment by the manager within the team which could in turn cause friction with team-mates.

steel outlines the best approach:

"Friendly but not too fraternal is generally the best course of action"

In-game etiquette

An aspect of playing competitive Counter-Strike that is overlooked by some is the way players behave in-game towards one another. Due to the fact it often has little direct bearing on the results of games it can be easy to dismiss this area as one which needs no adjustment or contemplation, this is certainly not the case and reasons will here be outlined which clarify why.

Everything said is remembered

If a player should, perhaps as a result of frustration with himself or the opposition, take it upon himself to make comments in messagemode 1 which are anything but cordial such remarks can easily come back to haunt him when they damage future possibilities. Opposing players and teams one dislikes for the moment may become ones which in the future one has an opportunity to play for/with, or whom one may eventually desire to play for/with. Negative comments reflect badly upon the personality of the person making them and in as limited a scope as messagemode 1 text one doesn't want to do anything to unnecessarily give a bad impression of oneself to one's peer group.

As Rambo explains:

"Word spreads quickly when a player or team chooses to behave in a bad manner. It can lead towards becoming less popular and even being denied a scrimmage for practice. So play with some class, and most importantly for fun."

steel puts the matter succinctly and touches upon the next point when he says:

"If someone's hostile toward you it's best to ignore them because whatever you do will be turned against you"

Circumstances where the player is momentarily in the wrong are not the only ones which need consideration. There will often be situations where an opposing player will make comments, perhaps he is frustrated at dying in certain circumstances or perhaps he feels a player is not playing fairly. Whatever the circumstances that arise where comments of a negative or as steel puts it "hostile" nature are directed towards oneself or one's team it is always best first and foremost to simply ignore them and continue as though they had not been made. As well as sparking bigger problems replying can engage the player unnecessarily with the context of such comments and their implications, all this serves to do is irritate the player himself and take him out of his game which had been going along fine up until then.

- Don't make negative comments to or about any player ingame, nothing good can come of them.
- Ignore negative or hostile behaviour by opposing players, it only serves to engage you unnecessarily and take you out of your game.
- Hostile behaviour has the potential to burn potential future bridges in a player's career, especially that of an unknown or improving player.

Joining/Leauing teams

The movement of players amongst teams in Counter-Strike has always been a fast and furious business with few teams retaining stable rosters over the long term. If a player is to advance both as an individual player and as a team player it is vital he understands how to evaluate when it is time to move on and when it is time to stay put and work towards building something better. Short term wins and losses are not the only factors to consider.

Evaluate the situation from a higher level

When deciding whether it is time to leave a team and join another one should not simply base one's decision on something as drastic/hasty as a recent loss or a simple argument with a team-mate. Each team period of a player's career can last months and represent something important in his progress as a player. Instead factors to consider should be the development of the team, its potential future development and how those two relate to the player's current development. If a team can improve given time it can often prove beneficial to both parties to remain together as building on an existing foundation is often more reliable a route to success than constantly changing to new surroundings and having to build something entirely new each time.

steel summarises the dilemma:

"When you see that the team's outgrown itself or its potential it's a good time to leave, assuming you are still improving or intent on improving"

Preparing the route to better teams

Unless a player is blessed with outstanding and obvious skills combined with a winning personality it is unlikely one will rise immediately to the top by the shortest route with no considerable effort on the player's part. As such it is important improving players learn to network with other players and teams who are of an equivalent or higher skill level to the player. Being able to befriend or ingratiate oneself with better players or players more suited to one's play style makes the transition to new teams containing them not only easier for all concerned but much more likely to become a reality. It is important one learns how to do this in a manner which does not lead to one being viewed as a "suck-up" or one who merely seeks to tell others what he thinks it would please them to hear.

steel puts it like this:

"Basically keep everyone neutral or at least in the know about you without being offensive. Also, people of influence should be regarded slightly differently if you intend to join their team. Someone whose ethics/behaviour you'd be opposed to should still be respected if you want to join their team"



Don't waste opportunities

If one ignores the social element of Counter-Strike entirely then it becomes a much more difficult task to climb the ladder to better and better teams. Being entirely quiet can allow one to be overlooked or passed over in favour of other players who are better known by the deciding party. It is important to create influence and links with the right people on one's way to the top. Local LANs are a prime example of where this element of the game can be an important factor to joining future teams.

Factors to consider when joining a team:

- Time required
- How long the team's members have played together
- Maturity level
- Experience/skill level
- Location
- Compatibility
- Dedication
- Potential
- Stability/longevity
- Communication
- · Resourcefulness
- Mental state

Weighing it all up

Ideally the player should aim to find a team whose members practice and play the same amount as him. If he can't put in 4 hours they want he will limit their advancement and vice-versa. It's important that practice is understood to be practice in a team and that scrimmages are played to both build chemistry and practice executing strategies which have been discussed beforehand. This makes practising more efficient than simply playing and playing with no clear objectives or goals.

Rambo explains this point:

"All scrims are used for is to prepare for matches, it's finding out what works and doesn't and which strats have the best success and comfort rate. Practice is improving so if you're missing practice, not only are you hurting yourself but 4 of your team-mates. Make sure you can attend all the practices before you join. Also stay active and try to contribute while staying positive."

After practising it can be useful for players to discuss and work out potential problems or weaknesses instead of jumping right in and playing again immediately. Too much emphasis should not be placed upon performance in terms of score in scrims as long as progress is being made as far as improving strats and their execution within the team.

Rambo sums it up like this:

"Ideally the player should be playing with people around the same age or maturity level. If some members of the team play very loosely to have fun and others are more serious and focussed there are going to be conflicts. When it comes to experience level playing with team-mates with more experience will help the player develop his own game further. If one is playing with team-mates with less experience it is important to be patient

with them and teach them in a constructive manner."

Rambo explains the way the potential of a team affects one's decision to join them:

"If you see a lot of potential in a team who are dedicated and fast learners you could help build this team up with your influence or practice and get better as a team. This will take patience but it could pay off big"

Location of members within a team will not only affect their online performances in terms of how members ping to the same server but also the feasibility of attending LANs. If members are too far apart then the medium pings to servers will not be good enough, also the benefits of attending local LANs or practicing locally are removed.

It is important for members of a team to be compatible with each other. How members get along has an effect upon the team's performance as if members all like each other and get along well they will be able to practice long hours with less conflicts or problems than players who are less compatible. Having fun and being able to relate to other members helps with building chemistry. Stubborn players or players with big egos are best avoided. The player should seek out reliable team-mates who show up on time for practice and give their full efforts in practices and matches. Reliability is

also important in terms of players' mental states, if players are prone to getting mad easily it will bring down the team. Joining a team with a good leader is advised as the leader is the backbone of a team. Two factors which are highly subjective but should be considered are how intense a team are and how dedicated they are. If a team is intense they will be hungry to win and if they are dedicated then the motivation to practice and win will be there also.

To aid in understanding how the multitude of factors should be weighed up here are some basic profiles for different levels of player who may be deciding to join a team.

Basic player

High importance: Experience/skill level, time required, how long the team's members have played together and compatibility

Medium importance: Dedication, location and mental state

Lesser importance: Resourcefulness, communication, stability/longevity and potential

steel's explanation:

"The basic player is looking to improve their skill as much as possible and to learn from his peers' experience so those get the most priority. He is less worried about his clan's overall state as it's usually just a stepping stone and a high level of clan dedication can't be expected at that level of play"



Intermediate player

High importance: Experience/skill level, time required, how long the team's members have played together, dedication and potential

Medium importance: Maturity, location, communication, stability/longevity and mental state

Lesser importance: Resourcefulness

steel's explanation:

"The intermediate player will again be looking for players of a high calibre (relative to him) to sharpen his skills. He is also more critical of a team's dedication as this team could be the one that takes him to the next level. He places somewhat higher importance on communication, stability and potential in this next level team. Team resourcefulness remains the least important factor as it isn't absolutely required for reaching the next step."

Championship player

High importance: Experience/skill level, dedication, potential, maturity, communication, stability/longevity and mental state

Medium importance: Location and resourcefulness

steel's explanation:

"The championship player will be looking for a well rounded team and the only factors of less than very high importance are location and resourcefulness"

- Don't make drastic long-term decisions based on short-term circumstances.
- When your own development outgrows the team's potential development it may be time to move on.
- Learn to network with other players from equivalent or better teams to improve chances of being recruited to those.
- Make links with people of influence to ensure other players/teams are aware of you and consider you.
- Don't stay quiet when you have an opportunity to forge links.
- Use local LANs to make links amongst your peer group of players.
- Make sure you can play as much as your team needs you to and vice-versa.
- Teams which use scrims to practice improve more efficiently than those who just play simply for fun.
- Find people of the same age group or maturity level so the mood of the team is the same.
- Team members need to be compatible and get along.
- Find reliable team-mates who show up on time and give their all ingame.
- · Join a team whose leader you like if you can.
- The hungrier and most dedicated a team are the better if you are aiming to be successful.

MAKING USE OF POPULAR OPINION

Just as when it comes to joining teams a player must learn to strategically deal with his relationships with players/teams so a player must learn to strategically manipulate popular opinion about himself. Those who can successfully do this in the right directions create a buzz about themselves and their play style which as it works its way around not only increases their exposure but feeds back into the team community in putting them at the forefront of recruiting team's minds and creating a better mental image of themselves in their opponent's and future teams' minds.

Rambo starts off with a handy tip:

"A good alias or clan tag can make the difference of being remembered or not. So choose wisely."

LANs are important

The first and most important place one can begin to manipulate public opinion is in the LAN environment. Going to a LAN and playing well not only makes observers think highly of the player but also his opposition. Similar victories online can much more easily be shrugged off or attributed to a variety of excuses. Doing well at a LAN reinforces one's position at least until the next LAN. People often remember the best games of a player very vividly in association with him.

steel outlines the matter:

"Barring extreme situations most people remember the best or worst performances of a player so a single exceptionally good or bad publicly displayed performance can make or break a reputation"

Releasing POV demos

For players who have reached the level where there will be interest if they release a POV demo of an official match the art of knowing when and which to release is a fine one and can bring about a great altering of public opinion one way or another depending on what decisions are made by the player beforehand. Performing very well against a moderate team in a demo will do more for one's public image than doing moderately/ok against a much better team. Public perception is such that players often have difficulty relating teams and individual players' performances to each other, especially since most POV demos show the player killing the opposition and as a result seeming better than them.

steel explains why this principle works:

"When people watch your mega demo, they will think that's what you will be like against the best team whereas if you release the only decent demo against the best team, they will see you as at best that good versus that top team."

- Going to LANs and performing particularly well in individual matches goes a long way to increasing one's public image.
- Release demos of yourself playing very well against ok clans as opposed to moderately/ok against good clans. The former has more of an impact.

SELF-PROMOTION

On the surface Counter-Strike might seem to be just a game of fragging and planting/defusing bombs. In reality competitive Counter-Strike is all about the people behind the monitors, as a result success is predicated upon a player's ability to promote his image and identity to those people as much as it is upon his prowess on the server. The players who make the right connections and establish the right image with the right people will go further than those who simply keep to themselves and hope their pure fragging ability can take them to the top. There is no single path to the top but there is a multitude of ways for a prospective top player to establish and improve their image in order to get there.

Rambo outlines the basics of self-promotion:

"Be yourself, be optimistic and enjoy the game. Be friendly and try to meet people. Like many other things climbing the reputation ladder of gaming comes down to who you know. If you are playing with or against the best, or the better players you are promoting yourself. Making good demos, frag movies or impressing these better players is helpful as well. Being #1 on the ladder for stats, things people see. You want to show people why you are valuable so focus on those strengths"

Climbing the ladder

The best way to climb the ladder is having a friend or acquaintance who can involve the player with better players, whether this is getting him into pugs/scrims or simply vouching for his talent with them. In this scenario the player is advised to take every opportunity to meet and associate with better players he gets through this contact. Once involved with that superior peer group the player can set about impressing them with his skill, attitude and general contributions. The player should focus upon his strengths and be himself so as to have this group of players remember him and be drawn to him as a player and personality.

For those players without friends who can put them in contact with the next level of players the route is more difficult but there are still things which can be done to maximise one's chances. Again the key is focusing on one's strengths so that team-mates and opponents can be impressed by the best elements of one's game and these will be remembered. Top fragging, creating frag movies and outplaying one's opponents on a consistent level will draw attention and get the player noticed.

Rambo states the fact:

"If you have game that's the most impressive and wanted talent"

Personality goes a long way in the gaming world. This is not limited to purely having people like the player but also all the little qualities about his personality and style which will impress others and create value in their minds. Staying positive, supporting team-mates, being vocal and intense are little things which are needed to build chemistry with people. General contributions can include extra bonuses such as web design, strat making abilities, anti-stratting knowledge and scheduling, all little things which can help a team. Picking a name that people

will remember is advisable, for example a completely made-up name like "rOduk" is less likely to be remembered than say "tentpole". Once the player has begun to make progress sticking with the same name is advised, credibility is lost when one's name is changed regardless of the reasons. Getting strangers to spend time with the player can be difficult so dedication is required in this element of CS just as in-game.

- Be optimistic, friendly and try to meet people.
- Use friends who are in the know to get involved with higher calibre players.
- Impress superior players with your skills, attitude and general contributions.
- · Focus on your strengths so you are memorable.
- Top fragging, making frag movies and outplaying opponents on a consistent basis are good ways of drawing attention.
- Develop a positive attitude, support your team-mates and be vocal and intense in-game.
- Pick a name that is easily memorable.
- Stick with your name/alias once you have begun to make progress.
- Apply the same kind of dedication to self-promotion as you would any other part of your game.

Sponsorship

For the player or team intent on climbing the ladder of competitive play knowing how to deal with sponsors or prospective sponsors is a vital part of ensuring one's progress upwards is as quick and painless as possible. This element of Counter-Strike where the business world meets the competitive community of players can produce a number of tricky situations to deal with for those without considerable past experience. Here the basic pitfalls will be outlined along with approaches to sponsorship for different levels of player/team.

Make sure it's real

The majority of CS players do not understand their own value to sponsors and as a result make ridiculous demands or submit to poor offers. It is important to ask a variety of questions while understanding that a promise and an action are two entirely separate things. Many sponsored teams work on a voucher relationship whereby they are promised something in return for a service or reaching a specified performance level. In a number of cases the sponsor's side of such an arrangement does not materialize. Many teams will claim to be sponsored but are in fact being exploited, as is quite common with many mid-tier teams.



A sponsor's main concern is how much exposure you're giving them.

steel outlines the most effective basic approach to attaining sponsorship:

"The best route of sponsorship is, as management, in creating relationships at LANs or events and not over ventrilo or IRC"

Sponsorship in the real world

Realistic expectations for each level of competitive Counter-Strike may go as follows:

For lower-tier (CAL-p etc): server donation, ventrilo hosting etc.

For mid-tier teams: small expenses paid or reimbursed (be very wary of reimbursements when dealing with sponsors for the first time), small hardware sponsorships (mousepads and the like)

For higher-tier teams: Actual monetary support, full server support free of charge, small travel expenses covered

Understand the system

It is important to understand that actual cash is much more difficult to obtain through sponsorship than merchandise or services allowances. This is especially the case if the team has not attended or placed highly at major events and is often the biggest mistake teams make, asking for money first.

Establish your value

Always remember to keep each sponsor informed of the team's progress so they come to understand the value for them in continuing sponsorship. This can be easily achieved in the form of a monthly report or a diary of

action outlining each step the team has taken to promoting the sponsor's product or service.

As steel succinctly puts it:

"You are working for them, so you need to take initiative and SHOW them clearly in what way you've benefited them"

- Always question important aspects of potential sponsorships to ensure they are for real.
- Many clans who say they are sponsored are not receiving anything, even if they may have been promised otherwise.
- Ideally your team's management will create relationships with sponsors through LAN events instead of only through online means.
- Understand the kinds of sponsorship it is reasonable to expect for your team based on your current competitive standing.
- It is more likely you will get sponsorship in the form of merchandise or service allowances as opposed to cold hard cash.
- When you have a sponsor work out a system to regularly remind them of how you are helping promote their business.

TEAM SPIRIT/MOTIUATION

When it comes to increasing a team's spirit or motivating one's team-mates the value of noise and energy should not be underestimated. A team huddle prior to a big game can effectively ensure all members of the team are at the appropriate level of motivation and their energy is raised.

steel makes that point:

"Noise and energy are definitely a huge help to overall team morale and momentum"

It is important that the player ensures his team-mates understand the difference between genuine congratulation or encouragement and the kind of automated behaviour most players engage in after each and every round. This can mean not repeating the same things in similar situations so as not to lose the impact of the remark.

The amount of attention and encouragement a player needs is entirely subjective and one needs to get to know the personnel of one's team so one is able to gauge correctly when specific players need motivation and when specific players would be best served by being left alone to cope in a scenario.

The point is aptly made by steel:

"When a lower energy player loses a round, he might need a word of encouragement to get back into the zone."

Rambo explains his approach:

"The ultimate goal before and during a match is having all team members having full confidence in themselves. It is your duty as a team-mate to keep this confidence level as high as possible. I remember numerous times where we would be down to the last few crucial rounds



A pumped-up team is one that's ready to win

and a team-mate would say something to help build my confidence to call our next strategy. "What we doing boss?" or "we're better then them, let's end this now". Provide positive emotions and stay confident."

Individual morale/spirit/motivation

The following are some barriers players encounter when practicing or competing:

Frustration from losing

When losing it's important for the player to stay positive and optimistic while trying to fix the problems. Patience and dedication will get the player through the losing stage. Playing while frustrated can cloud the player's judgements and throw him off

the game he knows how to play. Irrational mistakes will be made and more mistakes in general than when the player is fully focused. It is worthwhile for the player to remember that he started playing the game having fun so he should try and get back to that mentality. As with any other competitive activity improvement is accomplished through a lot of practice and experience, so only through hard work and perseverance will the player truly improve.

Boredom

When the player has played too much he may burn himself out and lose the fun of playing. This can be a good time to play side games or just step away until the desire to play for fun has returned.

Lack of inspiration to practice

A problem encountered in practice is that it can be really boring. Few people like to do homework, but it helps them when they have a test and the same thing applies with Counter-Strike. Practice is where the player memorises and drills strategies to implement in the test (matches and scrimmages) Proper practice will make the player as ready as possible. This principle should be kept in mind: what the player puts into practice ultimately prepares him for the true goal, winning. There are many ways to practice; these can be serious, casual or improper. If the player wants to truly practice then he must decide what and how he is going to practice each element. This applies whether it's his aim, sound, strategy or communication. He should focus on that point and practice it gradually. Practice is work, but it is just a game.

Lack of energy/spirit/enthusiasm

Nobody likes a flat team-mate. When competing morale can be just enough to get a player a victory. Playing with louder communication, confidence, and a positive energy can help one's team-mates in many ways. One person can boost the entire team's morale. It's important to always enter a match with this energy and confidence; the team will communicate and play more relaxed.

- A team huddle gets all you and your team-mates on the same level of motivation.
- Noise and energy are keys to helping team morale.
- Make sure your team-mates know the difference between real encouragement and simply automatic responses which don't mean as much.
- Don't make the same remarks repeatedly in the same situations or they lose value.
- Learn about your team-mates so you know when certain ones need some motivation or a boost of morale.
- Stay positive and optimistic while trying to fix problems which occur instead of getting frustrated.
- If you get bored and stop having fun playing Counter-Strike try playing some different games until you feel your desire returning.
- · Practicing is hard work but you get out of it what you put into it.
- In the end you're practicing for the ultimate situation: winning.
- Be loud, confidence and keep a positive energy so you can help your team-mates with their morale and enthusiasm.
- High team morale can be the factor which pushes you over the edge to a victory.

THE POLITICS

In the interest of helping the player understand the kinds of individuals he will come across in the Counter-Strike community this section outlines a number of personality types and their qualities. Most teams will be composed of different mixes of these personality types and it is also important to consider that the sometimes more than one type will be combined in a single person.

The suck up

This player is typically over-enthusiastic around groups of players he wishes to be integrated with. He wants to play 24/7 to prove himself but his overboard enthusiasm and yearning need for attention from better balanced players can hinder his progress.

The egotist

As someone who overemphasises the confidence aspect of social interaction the egotist overcompensates for his failings in-game with self-promotion and confidence.

The invisible player

This individual is usually soft-spoken in nature both ingame and out and generally avoids social interaction. These players may be very critical of their own play and as this is the only form of vocal criticism they express in-game this is all their peers may notice about them.

The clown

Typically a highly outspoken individual who may not take themselves entirely seriously. Unless the clown's playing ability shows a high degree of skill his credibility can suffer as a result of his nature. In the hands of a very strong player this personality type can be used to build strong bonds with team-mates, inspiring a kind of fraternal camaraderie.

The whiner

Often an eccentric person this type can also simultaneously be the egotist in some cases. The whiner is always complaining or offering excuses for any failure in his play instead of taking a critical look at his actions and why they were unsuccessful. These rants are usually quickly dismissed or ignored by his peers or team-mates and his credibility suffers as a result.

The nice guy

Very friendly and slow to criticise others on a personal level this personality type typically plays the role of moral support in a team. His uplifting comments and overall positive outlook can lift his team in seemingly dire moments.

As one would expect with as complex an organism as a human being no one single personality type will fit each and every person. Likewise just as a single individual may be an amalgam of the various types listed here and perhaps some not listed so a team will need to be composed of different types in order to function on any kind of successful level.

Defending a bombsite (once taken)

As a bombsite is being taken players should be calling out where and what they are watching, this is vital. There should not be multiple players watching or positioned in the same spots. The player should pick a spot which can afford him cover. When the bomb is planted all the attacking team must do is delay the opposition for 35 seconds so it can explode, in light of this picking a spot that allows the player to delay time and preserve his life for longer is a big factor in success.

After choosing a spot it can be worthwhile for the player to mention if he is watching it aggressively or passively, this allows team-mates to know whether or not they have cover from certain areas. After securing one's own spot one should be aware of the positions occupied by one's team-mates, this way when a team-mate is killed one is aware of where he was located and which spot is now open. Effective grenade usage is important, flashes can delay a site being retaken and a grenade in a choke point can do a lot of damage to the CTs.

Rambo explains:

"Make sure you throw your flashes with some delay, you want to throw a flash bang every few seconds when you anticipate them outside of the site"



3D vs mTw at Clikarena 2003

If the player sees the enemy flashing then he can counter-flash or keep flashing out of the site so that the opposition are interrupted by white screens. Smoke grenades thrown in choke points can be useful also; it is harder for a CT to retake a site when his vision is obscured by smoke. It is important for the player to remember not to smoke an area which facilitates the CT's entry into the site.

Rambo sums the essence up simply:

"Once you take the site just hold your angle and delay, you want to be defensive and waste as much time as possible. This is the defensive route of holding a site."

On the offensive side of holding a site the player may find himself outnumbered and so getting a pick can be useful. The player can catch enemies off-guard by peeking, flash peeking or just playing aggressively. This kind of play puts pressure on the opposition which is always a good thing. On the other hand when the terrorists have the number advantage over the Counter-Terrorists it is best to play defensively and not get picked, forcing them to make a move while burning time off the bomb clock.

Things to keep in mind when holding a site:

- The player should pick a spot he is comfortable in and then say which choke point he is watching.
- Grenades should be used to clog up choke points or flashes to disrupt/delay retakes.
- When outnumbered it can be useful, but also risky, for the player to try and pick off an enemy by playing aggressive and then having done that revert to defensive play.
- Players should use their teammates to hold a site; if they get in trouble or stuck they can just hide.



3D vs Ouch at the WCG USA 2005 Qualifier / Rambo's POV

- Being concealed is one of the best things to be in Counter-Strike so the player is advised to simply hide and delay if the bomb timer has very nearly run down. This is because a living terrorist is always a threat to defusing counter-terrorists and thus gives you more time.
- Setup cross-fires with team-mates to increase effectiveness of covering choke points.
- Ensure there is always someone watching the flank, typically this responsibility should go to the last player/the one lagging behind.

Retaking a Bombsite

Communication is crucial during the retake of a bombsite. Some things the player should do or say during a retake:

- Call the location of any enemies as specifically as possible.
- Use grenades to soften enemies and clear certain spots.
- On occasion it may be best for a player to flash and retake a bombsite by himself.
- When retaking a site as a team the player should figure out where the enemies are and then coordinate a flash retake. It's best for the team to throw all their flashes at once and at the same time. This way the team do not blind each other and when entering the site itself everyone within it has been thoroughly flashed. It's vital to attack as soon as the flashes go off.
- If the player has some time to work with then trying to get pick offs can be a good idea, especially if he has an idea of the enemy's locations. Learning spam spots helps to clear areas also.

Defusing the bomb

Smoke can be used to give cover or thrown in the direction of the enemy in combination with flashbangs. A popular and effective strategy is looking at the location the enemy is believed to be in, pretending to defuse and then killing the enemy when he peeks out. On occasion enemies can even be lured out purely by the sound of the use key even if the player is not actually on the bomb. Throwing a grenade and defusing at the same time as it explodes can mask the sound of the defuse starting. The player should also be aware that in certain areas he can defuse through objects such as short walls.

The player can also boost off the bomb onto certain boxes to surprise the enemy when he peeks out (an example being the infamous moto box on de_inferno). This boost can't be done by the player that actually planted the bomb, as he is unable to walk on top of the bomb after planting it. An alternate approach to the fake-defuse followed by killing the peeker is to fake-defuse then move aggressively towards the enemy's location and kill him. The player can flash and then defuse. When fake-defusing it is important not to make any sound after the defuse sound. The player should attempt to keep a mental clock running so he knows roughly how much time he has to execute any part of a potential plan. When the fastest beeping starts the player has approximately 5 seconds left before it explodes.



Team communication

The player's ability to visualise the entire game as it plays out is based in large part upon communication to and from his team-mates. The better this communication is the better the player's understanding of what is happening becomes and the same applies for his teammates.

Communication is all about relaying information. The player should aim to be concise and timely with his calls. Calling simple locations and numbers of enemies such as "3 alley, 2 cove" allow for the important information to be relayed without a lot of potentially unnecessary information getting in the way. If each member of the team is contributing adequately on the communication side of things the player will eventually know where each opponent is located. This is the reason people are able to properly rotate and stack bomb sites.

steel adds on the topic of location names:

"Very unique descriptions of map spots can facilitate quick reaction to their calling but be aware that this type of terminology is hard to teach to a newcomer to the team or is hard to be rid of when you join a new team so it's easiest to adopt the most widely used terminology."

Make a call if the bomb becomes visible. Upon dying hold tab to see if they have the bomb. The player should not be afraid to express gut feelings or calculated assumptions provided the he can do so without leading his team-mates to mistake these for his normal calls upon seeing opponents. Aim to communicate with intensity and confidence. When team-mates are engaged in the heat of battle it can be useful to communicate for them (if ghosting is allowed)

Rambo adds:

"I often relay important information that team-mates have already said such as bomb down, all 5 rushing or the time is running out. I also relay information from a team-mate's screen when he is too focused on playing."

Have a memorable name for specific strats so instead of "3-2 split A" something like "A warsong" or "Delay left bumblebee".

Suggesting a play for a team-mate can be quite common. A professional player will tell a team-mate to rush out, take a site or flank because he is aware of what is going on over the larger scale.

steel makes this point about relaying important information:

"The flanker or whoever is doing the distant attack' information is the most important since they hear and see things the other players don't have access to at all so they need to be very communicative, but they have to keep in mind what's important to mention so as not to speak too much for no reason"

The player can employ humour in team_say to alleviate anxiousness between rounds, especially in tense tournament moments. Still the player should keep in mind even this element of communication must be short and sweet so as not to cause undue distraction from the team's focus.

- The better you and your teammates communicate the better you will all understand what is happening.
- Learn how to relay information efficiently. Give the important information without unnecessary additions.
- Call spots on the map and numbers so your team-mates immediately know what you're referring to and how dangerous the threat is.
- Unique location names can help you pinpoint spots for your teammates but if they are too unique they will be tough to teach new members and to forget when you join another team.
- Call if you see the bomb and check when dead if the enemy have picked it up.
- Don't be afraid to make calculated guesses as long as your doing so doesn't make your team-mates think you're giving rock solid information.
- Call for team-mates who are too busy fighting if ghosting is allowed.

Team improvement

As well as improving as an individual it is important that a player's team as a whole be improving so the end goal of moving up competitively can be reached by both ends.

As Rambo puts it:

"After joining a suitable team it's important to always be progressing as a team."

Things to work on:

- Communication
- Strategies
- Chemistry/team-play
- Consistency
- Morale
- Practice schedule

Communication

It's important that every member of the team is communicating and being interactive. This relates to team-play as it involves team-mates being verbal and ensuring they are all on the same page. Players should be just as active in communication in practices/scrimmages as in real matches.

steel says:

"Practice shouldn't be treated or viewed as a chore so anyone with that mindset will be unproductive from the start."

It's also useful for players to communicate outside of Counter-Strike, whether that's through an instant messaging program or via IRC. This kind of interaction is healthy and helps strengthen the bonds between players.

See the communication section for more information.

Strategies

There are several ways to acquire strategies for use within the team. Watching demos of professional level teams playing and copying their strategies is an obvious one. The player can also review demos of matches he has played against opponents who used effective strategies and steal those. Strategies can also be created purely by brainstorming between members of the team, bouncing ideas off one another. When creating new strategies amongst new team members, it can be useful to start by talking about who is comfortable in what areas, then revolve the team's strategies around that.

steel adds:

"If you're really in a rut then just trying something that works for pros can help you but you still have to build specifically for your teams' and your players' abilities to maximise the potential."

It's important players are comfortable within their roles in a strategy, as a result having every member of the team's input during the period a strategy is being de-

signed is useful in achieving this goal. Developing any strategy requires time both for the creation and tweaking periods of it

Rambo explains the process:

"First you have to think of the general goal of the strat. Then go through each little step to achieve that goal. Once those steps are thought of you should dry run the strat, just you five, over and over until it's perfectly fluid. Then run that strat multiple times against different teams."

Each time the strategy has been executed the player and team should be thinking what could improve it and then implementing that in the next practice session where it is run. By going over each strategy and its elements in this fashion as a team soon a solid foundation of strategies will be built up which can be executed efficiently by the team. Sometimes it is small things which make a strategy fail and fixing these and running it again can be better than giving up on it.

Rambo adds:

"This type of schedule takes a lot of patience and dedication and it's like homework but it's necessary to build strats."

Chemistry/team-play

Chemistry can be developed and practiced by practicing and dry running strategies so players have a solid understanding of how their roles fit together. When team-play and chemistry are built up everyone knows what each other is doing and the strategies run fluidly. Communication is essentially the verbal form of team-play, by communicating team-mates are working together to achieve a goal. Playing together frequently will also help a team build and maintain chemistry and team-play. Players need to know which spots their team-mates play in and their tendencies in terms of mid-round decisions; this allows them to fit into the overall scheme of play.

Consistency

To build consistency a team must have the proper dedication level and work ethic. When a team is regularly practicing in an efficient manner their level of consistency will rise and they will be more likely to win. It is also important for the team to play the style each time, improving where there is room. When a team is used to playing one way and has achieved success that way they should stick with it, which is not to say improvements cannot be made though. Aiming to play with similar pings and on the same servers can aid consistency also.

Morale

The aim should be to keep a fun, light mood while still maintaining a level of seriousness and a professional outlook. Being able to enjoy themselves will help in a team's progress to improving themselves. As a result it is important for scrims to be fun for the members involved otherwise they will not try as hard and may not improve. Finding a happy medium between scrimming and practicing is the key.

Practice schedule

This is one of the most important factors in improving a team. It is recommended that a set schedule is put in place all the time so the team plays on specific days between specific hours every week. This also means players must turn up on time so they don't waste the improvement opportunities a well run practice schedule provides.

- When you join a team it's important the team is always progressing.
- Players need to be as active and interactive in practices and scrims as in real matches.
- Strategies can be taken from professional teams or opponents as well as thought up by your team.
- It is useful to get everyone's input in making a strat so everyone is comfortable with what they have to do in it.
- Once you have a strat dry run it with just your team in the server then test it out on real teams once you've got it down.
- A lot of patience and dedication is necessary to get good strategies.
- Chemistry can be built by practicing and dry running strategies and playing a lot together.

- The better a team communicates the better their chemistry will be.
- Playing together a lot and under the same circumstances (server, pings, strategies, style) will help a team become consistent.
- Find a balance between keeping practices fun and light and at the same time serious and professional enough that your team is improving.
- If practice becomes too much of a chore or boring people won't try hard or improve.
- Having a set practice schedule that everyone turns up for will help your team improve.

Jamming (A.K.A. IMPROUISING TEAM-PLAY WITH A TEAM-MATE)

In the context that will be used in this section jamming is used to mean situations where the player must improvise in his team-playing with a team-mate. This might mean when they are in a 2vX situation, or just during any round where working together can improve their chances but there is no outright strategy pre-prepared for the upcoming situation.

In situations requiring jamming the player should ideally think first of his objective and then break it down into sub-objectives, steps towards reaching the overall objective. This aspect should be taken care of intuitively. A sub-objective might be securing a specific area while heading towards a site to defuse, for example. In these situations where the player is not the last alive it is useful for one of the players remaining to take the initiative and drive the flow of the action. This will aid in the coherency of the player's actions from that point onwards to reaching the overall objective.

A critical part of jamming resides in the player identifying the "threats" his opponents will most likely pose to his success in defusing, killing the last guy or planting etc and quickly being responsive to them.

steel explains an example:

"You need to be watching where your enemies might peek before they are doing it obviously and this should take precedence over your actual end result objective in most cases as it's required for reaching that"

Rambo adds:

"Jamming is kind of like bouncing ideas off each other on the fly. You see him advance so you move off him or vice versa. Following each other in advancement."

TEAM ROLES

Just as is the case with any competitive sport the roles occupied within any given team are not identical for each member of it. Understanding which role the player is occupying in any given round is vital for him to effectively carry it out and simultaneously understand how he can improve his team-mate's ability to carry out their roles. In this section different types of team role are outlined.

Cannon fodder (a.k.a. entry player)

The entry player is the first player to enter typically heavily guarded areas on strategies which require a member of the attacking team to do so. In many cases this player's chances of surviving the round are low barring extreme fortune on his part. The exact kind of player who is suited to be an entry player is not rigidly defined, though they are rarely the best players in the team as these are often needed later in rounds to close out more difficult situations and so must remain alive. An entry player is usually a player who does not show reluctance in entering situations where he knows he will most likely die, instead accepting this aspect of his role and focussing on doing what he can to ensure the remaining members of his team can establish position in an area or have an increased likelihood of winning the round. Players who have the ability to aim guickly and possess good movement may be suited to this role.

The backstabber (a.k.a. the flanker)

Typically this player works on his own and his primary role is assisting the team's attack while it is taking place, but from a different position on the map. A common mistake associated with this player role occurs when players wait too long before adding their help to the attack, negating their overall involvement in the strategy. Inaction is usually the worst thing this player can do as even his mere presence in an attack, be it flashing or just shooting, will often force at least one enemy player away from the choke point area. This player can also be used to hold a specific location so if an attack on another area fails the team can rotate over and continue progress into his secured area. The flanker must be extremely attentive to the enemy's movements and relay them to his team-mates or team leader. Ideally the flanker should attempt to gain his position as early in the round as possible to take advantage of his added auditory input to the team's attacks.

Rambo adds:

"He also can be used as a faker. Faking before the other guys attack, or just attaining as much attention as possible. Flanking is all about timing, and taking advantage of rotation."

Strategy caller (a.k.a. team leader)



moto (left) leading 3D to their WCG victory in 2004

As a matter of circumstance this player will typically attempt to stay alive as long as possible since he is the designated strategy dictator. This will often mean him placing himself in favourable (easier) positions so he survives long enough to call the relevant plays and adapt to changes in the action. Ideally this player will float between two sets of players, acting as a lynchpin to coordinate the overall strategy. The strategy caller should master communicating and playing at the same time. His role is best suited to hold the bomb since he needs to stay alive.

Flasher

The most under-practiced aspect of flashing is the timing itself, as a result the main factor in failed strategies is poor timing. Considering the effective nature of flashbangs in 1.6 it is especially important that the timing of their use be correct. Ideally the team should have two people flashing an area continuously if it is small, or simultaneously in different spots if it is large to cover or

enemies can be expected at several angles. Flashing more than two one after the other offers no payoff as by the time the third has come in the effect of the first has faded.

Flashing from behind one's team as the team enters a doorway can work provided the player informs his team-mates in advance so they act accordingly that the enemies are blinded but the player's team-mates are only partially blinded. It is important to bear in mind that players can block flashbangs just as boxes or walls can so if the player stands on or next to a flash it may not affect the desired target of it. On fast strategies the team should have the players with the nearest spawns flashing first for maximum effect while the other players are arriving.

A personal example from Rambo:

"Whenever I throw a flash, I try to blind the spots that are watching the angle I'm about to enter."

Faker

This player is trying to get players from the other bombsite to rotate towards him through giving them attention. He is drawing grenades and trying to make the enemy think there are several players in his area, keeping the enemy from rotating to the bombsite that will actually be hit. This player can also be responsible for scouting out areas if the enemy are anticipated to be saving.

The last player into the site

In most situations five man attempts at entry into a bombsite are inefficient as players will block each other, get bunched up and slowed down by enemy fire etc. In these cases it is useful to have a designated player who watches the rear or stays back while the others enter the site. This player typically should remain close to the team as they enter the site but as soon as it is cleared or relatively neutralized he must make a decision to either stay in the site and help on defense in that way or take a further back position and watch the flank exclusively, albeit more effectively thanks to a better position. Both options are tenable but other factors need to be taken into account. Most sites require three players for good defense so the player must be aware of how quickly his opponent will flank after an attack. If their

flanking is too quick then the player may not have the appropriate time to fall back after the initial attack to watch the rear. It is often more efficient to setup cross-fires inside of a bombsite, this leaves the player more vulnerable to a fast re-entry though which will be harder to contain if all the team's players are bunched up inside the site. In such a scenario there will be little question in the retaking enemies' minds as to where players are likely to be located.

- Entry players are the first to enter spots that are usually heavily guarded.
- Entry players are usually not the team's best player as that kind of player must stay alive so he can use his talent later in rounds.
- The flanker helps team attacks from other areas of the map.
- Hesitation or inaction from the flanker is the worst thing he can do.
- The flanker should get to his spot as early as possible so he can relay sound based information he gets to his team.
- The strategy caller tries to stay alive as long as possible so he can oversee the execution of the strategy. This makes him ideal to carry the bomb.
- Flashers must learn and understand the timing of flashes on each attack.
- You can flash ahead of your team-mates as you all enter a doorway if you tell them first so they can look away.
- The faker is trying to give enemies in the other bombsite attention so they don't rotate, thinking there are multiple players in the faker's area.
- A faker can also scout out areas if he thinks the enemy are saving.
- The last player into a site or on an attack needs to make a decision to either stay in the site and help or pull back and setup position to kill flankers.

THE FOLLOWING OF TACTICS

The most important part of a coherent team is everyone understanding what their job is in a specific strategy and realizing how that job affects their team-mates and theirs. This section ties into the concept of usefulness explained in that section. A simple example would be if the player's specific job is to flank the enemy while his team attack another area of the map then he must be exactly aware of the kind of timing he must employ and the degree to which proper timing will affect his team's likelihood of success with this strategy.

steel adds:

"Usually in CS anything you do has an effect on how a round plays out, even inaction will have an impact, so this has to be taken into account when deciding how to play your role."

Complexity of strategies

A strategy needs to be fairly complex in structure or nature in order to throw off the opposing team's anticipation of it but as simple as possible during its execution to allow the team to be flexible during play. For most levels of competitive play the ideal way of functioning

is for roles within strategies to be dynamically assigned to players instead of one player always doing the same thing every time that strategy is run. This allows players to get an understanding of the difficulties and subtleties of their teammates' roles within the strategy.

steel explains the scenario where static team roles should be employed:

"The latter, inflexible way to execute with people statically assigned roles works better in the short term and for a seasoned team which already knows all the workings of every position."

In some cases within strategies there may be roles which require extreme specialization or a specific ability not every team member possesses. In this case one player may be required to play that role each time.

A common problem a team runs into is a conflict of what strategy should be used in a round. If this is a reoccurring problem then the team has a few solutions: plan what strategies will be used going into a scrim or match and dedicate a sole member of the team to be the strategy caller, or a democratic system can be employed where players throw out ideas and the team chooses from it.

For the strategy caller it can be very frustrating to have team-mates doubt or complain about a choice of strategy. Not only is this counter-productive, but it lessens the team's chance of winning the round.

If the team runs a strategy five times in a row, and have won with it; it doesn't matter if the defence is expecting it. As long as the execution is perfect the team still has a good chance of winning the round. Using what works is the rule of thumb.

- You need to know what your job is and how it affects your team-mates.
- Strategies need to be complex enough to fool the enemy but simple enough that you can execute them without being limited in your options.
- Unless you play on a top team the best system is to have the roles left open so different players can do them each time.
- If problems arise in the team over what strats to run either pick a dedicated strat caller who says what he will use going into games or use a democracy where everyone discusses.
- Doubting or complaing a strat caller makes him frustrated and reduces your chances of winning the round.
- Even if you run the same strat over and over it doesn't matter if the defense are expecting it if you execute properly.
- · Use what works.

USEFULNESS

All level of players understand the importance of being able to kill a lot of enemies or win in clutch round situations but an underappreciated aspect of competitive Counter-Strike within the context of the team is the degree of usefulness a player brings to that team. Usefulness can be a universal quality in that it doesn't mean any one specific thing and yet it can mean many things, the key being that all of them aid and improve the team for whom the player is a part of. Understanding this concept and how to re-evaluate his game as a result of it is an important step on the path to improvement for any player. The following are some of the ways a player can ensure he is being as useful to his team.

Being punctual and prepared means the player's team can start practices on time and doesn't have to go over strategies or positions unnecessarily. Being prepared also means coming to the table with input for the team's benefit, whether as a result of scouting the opposition or analysing the team's own play. Optimism is useful in maintaining the motivational level of a team and helping players from becoming too negative over relatively minor shortcomings. Team morale affects the overall performance of the team as a unit so being able to motivate one's team-mates is a definitely a useful quality to cultivate. Along with communicating in the right manner comes being able to interact with one's team-mates. This means not just giving out useful and pertinent information but also being able to receive it and take it on board.

If the player is able to both critique and help his team-mates the team as a whole benefits just as the individual benefits. For a team to reach its maximum potential it's key for all the members of the team to constantly be trying to improve both themselves and each other. Usefulness in the context of in-game involves the player not only communicating efficiently but understanding his role within the framework of the team. That means not only his individual role but the roles of his team-mates so he can adapt his so they meet at the appropriate places and the team can operate as a unit instead of five disparate elements running around unconnected.

Rambo offers an in-game example of figuring out the useful thing to do in a situation:

"You see a team-mate advancing and trying to take catwalk; it's your job as a team-mate to help him the best way you can. There are several ways to do this. You could smoke and/or cover his middle while he is pushing up, or flash catwalk before he peaks, or simply advance with him and take the angle together."

Understanding how to use the radar efficiently and successfully is important, as is being able to take in information relayed by the player's team and make correct decisions based upon it. From this information the player should be able to figure out where the enemies are also which gives him more information from which to figure out the useful thing to do at that given moment. He knows where his teammates are and what they are doing, where the enemies are and what they are likely trying to do. From there he only need figure out how he can help his team be more successful in countering or attacking what the enemy are trying to do.



As Rambo puts it:

"The best information you can have is knowing exactly where your opponent is, so you know the best way to handle that situation."

steel elaborates the point of making one's team-mates jobs easier and more successful:

"In a team role it's important to not only think of your objectives but also be aware of the effects of your actions on the jobs of your team-mates. For example doing a flash or nade somewhere could be beneficial to your flanking move, but severely impact the entry ability of your team-mate on the opposite side of the map, so awareness should always be exercised."

If the player is roaming around the map with no specific objective or order from the team leader then he is in an ideal situation from which to instead turn his efforts to helping a team-mate with their objective. This can mean covering someone who is flashing, watching the flank or anything else which improves the overall situation and likelihood of success for the team. This is why proper communication is one of the keys; it allows the player to know where his team-mates are and what they are doing so he can understand the positive or negative effects of any action he might take on their behalf.

- Usefulness is knowing what and when to contribute to your team's efforts to improve the chances everyone is successful.
- Being on time and prepared is useful for obvious and subtle reasons.
- Being optimistic and able to raise your team-mate's motivational level is beneficial to the team's performance.
- Becoming good at communicating with your team-mates, interacting with them and offering/taking advice will help everyone in the long run.
- In-game you need to communicate with your team so you know your role in each round and your team-mates, that way you know how you can help them.
- Helping a team-mate when you don't have any set task means doing something which adds to the likelihood he is successful in his task. This might be watching the flank or covering while he flashes.
- Usefulness is situational and relies upon you building up experience and using it for the benefit of your team.

Drugs and stimulants

The decision of whether or not to use stimulants/accelerants lies with the player understanding his ideal "zone" of performance and what it takes to get and stay there. For some people playing with caffeine or sugar in their body offers them the maximum level of alertness. It is important to note, though, that a foreign agent has to be familiar to the player's body and dosed in a controlled fashion for its effects to be predictable. The latter part of that is of consequence for players who intend on competing in the LAN environment since they must have access to acquire or maintain their supply of the specific substance at the tournament.

As steel says:

"Allowing yourself to become accustomed to a certain product while playing can be very detrimental should you be unable to supply it to your body/mind when it's critical."

The main point to be considered is the importance of knowing what the player's body requires to perform and whether supply of it can be maintained at all times. As with most aspects of Counter-Strike consistency is the key and needs to be a norm.

steel gives his personal preference:

"I personally preferred to stay as neutral as possible in regards to stimulation as I found the best conditions for me were perfectly rested and naturally alert.

In the spirit of controlling every factor that affects a person's performance, the safest option is to avoid artificial stimulation unless a very noticeable gain in ability is gained from them.

Online Tournaments

Competing in online tournaments is a good way for a player to gauge the coherence of his team from a teamplay standpoint and also its ability to withstand strong competition. A lot of players and teams will perform very differently depending on the difficulty of their opposition, also most online tournament formats are significantly longer than those employed at local LAN events and the like. As a result the player has more to evaluate in terms of team improvement, which should always be the main goal. At big LAN events like CPLs most up and coming teams will get to play a maximum of 2-3 matches due to the seeding system which makes it highly unlikely they can survive much longer than that due to playing the better teams in the field. For these kinds of teams online tournaments are a good place to see what they are capable of when it comes to the team-play aspect of the game.

It is important to understand that many players don't play the same in a LAN environment, that said as long as the player is familiar with his team-mates and confident in their ability to transfer from online competition to LAN then the learning potential to be gained from online competitions shouldn't be underestimated or ignored. Naturally in a situation where the player was forced to choose between playing in an online tournament or a

LAN tournament the LAN tournament should always take precedence. Even if the overall level of competition is lower or the team will be playing less matches LAN performance should always be a focal point for a team as it's the de-facto competition environment, as well as being the most unforgiving. In this respect a LAN tournament will always give back to the team more pertinent experience in the long run.

steel adds:

"I would venture to say that most online competitions should be used more for gauging your team's level only in a limited scope (looking toward itself, not comparing yourself to your opponents too much) as it's hard to compare yourselves to another team who might be vastly different once in a LAN environment."

From the standpoint of the individual it is far easier to gain recognition at a LAN event, even if the player is not attending with a particularly skilled team. The importance of attending LANs and meeting other players is an often underestimated aspect of improvement and climbing the competitive ladder in the North American Counter-Strike climate. It's also useful to attend LANs so the player has an understanding of his chances of winning or placing decently. LAN attendance makes joining other teams in the future much easier, especially when one takes into account the level of paranoia that surrounds players who play well online but have never been known to attend LAN events.

- Online tournaments are a good way to get an idea of how well your team works together.
- If your team tries going straight to the big event level like CPLs then you'll find that low seeding will mean you'll only get a couple of games before the top seeds knock you off.
- Online tournaments generally allow more actual games for up and coming teams and so are a good way to see what your team's potential is as long as you understand the team's LAN performance might not be identical.
- If you have to choose between a LAN tournament and an online competition take the LAN tournament for the experience you'll gain.
- As a player trying to get noticed and move up the ladder attending LANs will make this much easier and more likely to happen.
- The less LAN experience the more difficult it will be to be taken seriously at the higher levels of CS by prospective teams.

SLEEP PATTERN

Getting the right amount

The first thing the player must do is ascertain the amount of sleep his body requires to stay as alert as possible. This must be tempered by understanding the amount at which the player succumbs to drowsiness. Too much sleep has negative effects just as too little does. These amounts will vary depending on the individual and there are no hard and fast rules that can be given, the player must experiment and learn to gauge the effect certain amounts of sleep have upon his ability to perform and stay mentally and physically alert.

When the player is in the tournament environment he should ideally aim to get the right amount of sleep the day before so he has the stamina to last all day. If his stamina begins to spiral downwards it will be very difficult to overcome. In regards to this it is also worth considering that napping in the face of reduced stamina may do more harm than good as this can put the body into an even more relaxed and less alert mode. When the body is desperately seeking rest and a player is not accustomed to napping his body will assume the nap is in fact him going to sleep properly and start his brain towards the kind of brain activity which takes place during deep sleep. Being snapped out of this mode may leave the player more unable to perform than if he had simply toughed it out and stayed awake.

If a player must nap it is advisable he allows it to go on for no longer than 30 minutes as at this point the brain will be moving into deeper states of activity. Again circumstances will differ from individual to individual but just as with other areas of the player's game it is best to always aim for consistency, to try and achieve the same circumstances in which the player practices and performs in his home environment.

Time zone adjustment

The best way for the player to adjust his schedule is to wake up at a certain time each day regardless of when he goes to sleep and then refrain from napping or sleeping until he is going to bed properly again. If this cycle is repeated the player will find he can typically adjust his schedule in the space of a few days, which is a desirable time frame if the player has any ambitions towards competing abroad or in a very different time zone. Many players underestimate the difficulty involved in being awake and fully alert for a whole day when they must wake up at 8-9am to play matches while being accustomed to waking up later on their home schedule.

steel explains his process:

"I usually tried to adjust a week prior so as to be sure my body was on the right clock and wouldn't be hard to put to sleep at midnight or so in order to wake up early at a tournament."

Extenuating circumstances

There may be circumstances for which the player cannot reasonably plan, for example if his team are expected to progress through the upper bracket but drop in a sudden and unexpected fashion earlier and must play more games and later

in that same day. In these cases the player has little choice but to continue playing, he can make things easier on himself the next day though by ensuring he gets to bed immediately upon his required matches finishing. This will allow him to at least awaken moderately fresh and alert, or as much as possible.

Too much Counter-Strike can be a bad thing

Due to people underestimating the value of sleep and the impact it has upon the player's ability to perform there are often cases of lower seeded teams pulling off an upset win only then to be so pumped up from the victory they sacrifice some sleep time in favour of scrimming into the late hours of the night, no doubt hoping to pull off another upset in the next round. Likewise many players upon arriving at a big LAN event like a CPL will spend the vast majority of the first day scrimming in the BYOC (Bring Your Own Computer) area, thinking it will only improve their performance in the tournament. In reality there is a threshold for useful practice and warm-up time before it becomes detrimental to the player's stamina and overall energy supplies.

steel explains:

"All you need to accomplish in the BYOC is get warmed up enough so you have maximum energy once it's game time, not waste your strength on screaming too much etc on scrims down there. Playing 5 hours practice before a match is going to be more counter-productive than warming you up, all you want to do is get your aim and your head into it enough then stop playing and keep that mindset for the matches."

It is worth noting also that if the player spends all his time in the BYOC area staring at monitors his mental stamina may be sapped unduly. Instead he should consider also spending some time outside, taking in fresh air and allowing his mind a breather from having to focus.

- Learn how much sleep you need to be as alert as possible and how much will make you start to get drowsy.
- Try and get the right amount of sleep the day before the start of a tournament so you can last the whole day through all the matches.
- If you start to get tired don't try and nap, you might put yourself in a worse state than you are already in.
- If you must nap then try and make sure it lasts less than 30
 minutes as any longer and you're running the risk of putting
 your brain into a condition where it is being woken up from deep
 sleep.
- A good way to change your schedule is to wake up at the same time every day no matter when you go to sleep.
- If you start a week in advance you should be able to change your sleep schedule and be accustomed to it come the tournament.
- If you end up having to play longer than you had expected make sure you get straight to sleep once you're done.
- Don't sacrifice sleep for playing time, one day's scrims aren't going to help you more than recharging your body and mind.
- Don't spend all day straining your eyes looking at monitors, get some fresh air and walk around.
- Simply use scrims or practice to warm up your aim and get your head in the game, you don't need to waste your energy getting as many games in as possible before the real tournament match.

Tournament formats

Classic CPL double elimination.

Rambo:

"I hate this format the most; it's boring, random, and too short. Not enough matches, and too much time in between matches causing randomness. It's nice knowing which maps you are going to play though."

steel:

"Very momentum-driven in the sense that if you get key wins early, it means you (relatively) easily ride through the winner's bracket.

On the other hand, going down into the lower bracket means playing up to 8 matches in a single day if not more, until you are eliminated or you defeat everyone else in the lower bracket."

WCG one group stage and then single elimination

Rambo:

"I love group stage to bo3s, it's my favourite. You get to play multiple teams and can advance with a loss or even two. Bo3 allows the better team to win. You don't know what map you're going to play."

steel:

"Lets you lose early and still make it past the groups, on

the other hand you have to be on your game once you're out of the groups because losing at that point means you're eliminated with no second chances."

ESWC two group stages and then single elimination

Rambo:

"I like it the same as WCG group stage. Allowing the better team to usually advance being bo3."

steel:

"Has basically the same flaws/advantages as WCG's group stages except you get even more time to get your game to maximum before facing a single-elimination situation."

The values of different placings in each kind of event

Rambo:

"Top 3 is a winners placing. It's like a winning a medal in the Olympics. You get to stand on the final stage and receive a medal or big check. The prizes are usually significantly higher here. Top 5 is respectable. One break here or there could get you top 3. Top 8 noticeable but the lowest you want to place, considering prizes are weak here and not much recognition.

steel:

"Any top 3 placing at any of these events is definitely a huge achievement. Since the ESWC and WCG pay for the very top teams of each represented country to attend, the ratio of championship teams is usually much higher and therefore a top 8 placing has more merit at those events than at a CPL, generally speaking. It's all relative to the competitors present at the event. Another thing to consider is that it's possible to reach the top 8 (or even higher) of a CPL by getting an easier route through the winner's bracket. This is very rarely the case at the WCG/ESWC due to the differing team pools and tournament structures."

Introduction to experience

With their years of travelling the world attending the biggest Counter-Strike tournaments out there, and more importantly winning or placing highly at them, steel and Rambo have built up a wealth of experience from which to make TAO-CS. As well as allowing them to explain and divulge the correct theory and techniques for each aspect of competitive Counter-Strike there are also many points of interest that fans and improving players alike will be interested to find out from these two legends of the game. In this section the two players give their opinions, thoughts and experiences from a number of the big name tournaments they attended and on the players and teams they played with and against.

Whether the reader takes away the important lessons behind these experiences or simply enjoys getting inside the heads of championship level players and finding out their various opinions on their peers and their own performances is up to each individual. This section is provided both as an additional extra for all types of player and to provide extra reading material to which the player can return to again and again to gleam more gems of insight. It also gives the reader a unique look into the careers of two championship level players who have won over \$500,000 in combined team career winnings.



RAMBO EUENTS



CPL Winter 2002 (3D)

"I remember this tournament being a blast, not only because we got to play tons of matches versus top teams, but I was named MVP. This was a huge win considering CPL was the big event at the time. This rocketed our popularity and morale. We played with confidence and most importantly fun. We won a huge round in the finals during an eco save out that probably won us the championship. This is where I said 'whose aug is this?' I forgot Bullseye bought that damn thing. Drop it people! lol."

WCG 2003 (3D)

"I love WCG events, especially in Korea. It's the country of my nationality and gaming over there is just insane. They take it 3 levels higher then anyone else. For this particular event, they rented out the village they used for the Olympics. We had jump suits, fireworks and flags, a fiesta of international gaming pride. We played SK in the finals, losing a 10-2 CT lead on one of the maps."

WCG 2005 (3D)

"Going into this event I could've bet money on us winning. We had just come off multiple Source victories and felt like we were one of the most prepared Source teams heading in to the event. We ended up playing

Kazakhstan in the finals, who afterwards told me, "we don't have internet, so we play 2v3 against each other on LAN." They were 16 year olds proving themselves, I was impressed. This victory was much needed."



CPL Winter 2005 (3D)

"I felt extremely confident before heading into this event. We had prepared hard, and had a very talented roster. Unfortunately we lost to SK in a triple overtime match and to 4K right afterwards. It was a pretty devastating loss. If only we got that break, I wonder how far we could have gone."



ESWC 2006 (3D)

"We were playing pretty well considering the standards. Indoor stadium with over a thousand people jamming to music and speakers. I blew our chance to continue to overtime against fnatic. I made a retarded play and got picked off in a 2v1 with the bomb down. I felt pretty disappointed in myself after that match, even though I had over 130+ DAR or something. Doesn't matter if we lose."



WSVG finals 2006 (3D)

"Another devastating loss, this time in the finals. We were in perfect position to take first place. We lost in overtime to a very random ALTERNATE aTTaX team."



CPL Winter 2006 (3D)

"Most bizarre group stage of all time: zEx, fnatic, 3D and col. 3D loses to col in triple overtime and to fnatic, but we still advance. Losing to the Chinese Hacker afterwards."

RAMBO PLAYERS PLAYED AGAINST



Tyler "storm" Wood (TSG/coL)

"Tyler is one of the best CT players the game has seen. He always played the same spots, but he played them to perfection. Hitting his bomb site was painful, he used perfect use of his flashes to delay and disrupt an attack."



Danny "fRoD" Montaner (GB/united5/coL)

"Being the best AWPer in the world, he constantly picked people off. Attacking his site versus his AWP was always intimidating, because he rarely missed. His constant aggression, peaking, and play making abilities made running strategies harder then normal."



Matt "Warden" (GB/coL)

"warden is a stage match player, meaning he got the kills that mattered, and stepped up when it mattered. He is very solid over all. He plays with good reaction speed, and mixes a level of aggression and passiveness that is excellent."



Emil "HeatoN" Christensen (NiP/SK.swe)

"I remember watching HeatoN's screen for the first time when he was playing. He made spraying look easy, as he always hit his first shot and controlled his recoil very

well. We've had many matches against each other and have a good amount of respect for each others' gaming career. We were after all some of the few players still playing from years back."



Tommy "Potti" Ingemarsson (NiP/SK.swe)

"Potti was once a top 3 player, if not the best player in the world in his prime. He was the main fragger and impact player in the era of SK dominance. He owned us on de nuke in the X3-NiP match. His aim and map movement is amazing."



Griffin "shaGuar" Benger (3D)

"Me and shaGuar used to be in a Counter-Strike club channel (sopug) where we would be the captains and pick the remainder of the teams. We had over a hundred hours of pugging against each other. We constantly challenged each other."



Matt "bl00dsh0t" Stevenson (EG)

"Master of angle holding. Stevenson is a very good at playing defensively, and he's good at hitting his first shot when enemies are attacking or peeking. I tried getting him to join 3D several times, but he was very loyal to his team-mates."



Abdi "Spawn" Mohamed (SK.swe/NiP)

"A top skilled player. I heard he plays a LOT of CS which shows in his game. He relies heavily on his reaction speed, movement and aim. A guick thinker."



Patrik "fOrest" Lindberg (fnatic)

"One of the best riflers in the world. His aim and movement is easily top 5 in the world. He makes controlling the crosshair look so easy."



Dennis "walle" Wallenberg (NiP)

"walle is a player that I have always respected. His entire game play is very solid in every category. He is a solid strategy caller as well. A complete player that can start for any team."

Raphael "cogu" Camargo (g3x/mibr)

"His aggressive, accurate AWPing made taking his site a very hard task."

Michael "ahl" Korduner (NiP/SK.swe)



"Solid player with all the tools needed to be a world class player."

Justin "sunman" Summy (zEx/TSG/united5/coL)

"A veteran player. He's played since the betas giving him the experience advantage. He plays fundamental Counter-Strike and is the complete opposite of flashy play. Was associated with top American players early on. Examples: zEx, volcano, boms, tso, dominator, cbz, da bears."

Corey "Hanes" (Rival/Gamerco/united5)

"An innovator. His passion for gaming mixed with his imagination, makes him a self proclaimed "twacky" player. Known for his flashy movement, and fast style of play, makes him an entertaining player to watch."

Marcus "zet" Sundstrom (NiP)

"Top rifler. His insane mental to hand reaction skills make his aim almost perfect. One of the best entry and multi-killers as well. Playing almost too aggressive sometimes, but always backing it up with raw fps skill."

Mikey "method" So (WEW/GX)

"Top rifler. Everyone knows when he's on, he's going to be an MVP candidate of the match. Very controlled with his aim and movement, his reaction skills give him that world class talent."

Sal "Volcano" Garozzo (zEx/TSG)

"Top rifler. His aggression and eagerness to confront the enemy makes him very dangerous. His aiming and movement is world class as well."

🌉 Ksharp (CK3)

"Cowboy. His game play since the beginning has been reckless. Constantly pushing forward with a deagle and AWP. He heavily relies on his aim and reaction speed."

Dave "moto" Geffon (DoP/tso)

"A student. He coached a somewhat mediocre skill team in tso to an undefeated online title, with good old fashioned practice. He had a coach's mentality, wanting to practice, drill, and exercise until you were bored to death. Doing whatever it takes to win."

RAMBO PLAYERS PLAYED WITH



Mikey "method" So (3D)



"I've always been a fan of Mikey, he's a good friend of mine and we call him the peoples' champ. I tried getting him to join 3D a year and a half before he actually joined, but we voted to get volcano instead. Mikey's reaction speed is incredible, thus making him a very methodical player. He's very very good at defending and being stationary. His first shot is almost always a headshot. He can use rifles and the AWP. He's more of a passive player, both in and outside of game. He doesn't play with much energy, usually because he's so focused. He always changed his settings, for example: crosshair size, resolution and mousepad."



Dave "moto" Geffon (CK3/X3/3D)

"One of the greatest leaders of all time. He was the first American to create a team built around dedication and not skill (tso) With hard work and a strict practice schedule, he led them to the first undefeated CAL season. He's a hard worker and a solid player all around. He's a good competitor, and does what it takes and puts his all in to prepare or to win a match."



Kyle "Ksharp" Miller (CK3/X3/3D)



"The player I played the most with. Me and Kyle have a long history together and remain friends today. Kyle has always played with a carefree attitude, fearless and showing no respect to his enemies. He's a very confident player and relies heavily on his aim. He has guick reaction speed and good flicking aim. His flashy awp-deagle play started a style of play that many tried to replicate."



Ognian "steel" Gueorguiev (3D)

"His teamwork ability was always consistent. Me and steel played in a lot of positions together. He played very disciplined for his time, and had very solid aim. He used a ball mouse for quite a while. Solid over all, and is the general p00paX."



Tyler "storm" Wood (coL)

"Best lurker in all of counter-strike. Has uncanny ability to survive the toughest situations. He makes the best of any location. He always played the same CT spots, but he played them to perfection. He is also one of the most methodical players I have ever seen and always makes the smart decision. He never takes risks, unless forced to.



Marcus "zet" Sundstrom (coL)

"Best aggressor I've ever played with. This guy knows no fear, and is always pressuring or pushing. He makes his 3.6 sensitivity fit his play style, as he's always peeking corners. He is an action junky and movement is also one of the best in the world. His reaction speed is crazy too."



Danny "fRoD" Montaner (coL)

"Best AWPer I've played with, and probably in the world. He is the most impact player in the world as far as gamesense goes. His claw grip and 0.77 zoom_sensitivity_ratio make him hit almost every shot. He is also a fearless player and loves aggression and confrontation. He's a very confident player."



Griffin "shaGuar" Benger (3D)

"One of the best team-mates I've played with in a match. He always played with a level of intensity and eagerness that I always matched; we always fed off each others' energy level. He was always late to practice though. He is a very versatile player. He had no weakness except his practice ethic."



Sal "Volcano" Garozzo (3D)

"Sal's game play is one that is respected by the players. He is aggressive, confident, and very fast. Often times he is head shotting and getting multiple kills. His communications were loud and on point. He also never missed practice. His only weakness is his inability to lurk."



Johnny "boms" Quach (3D)



"Boms was a quality player. He had all the tools to be a world class player. He had experience, solid aim, and good team play. He understood the pace of the game and his calls were thought through."



Brian "BigDog" Ray (CK3/X3)

"I'd say Brian was ahead of his time. He played the game like people do today. By that, I mean back in the day people would just run around and play one dimensional. Brian seemed to play methodically. His aim and movement was world class. He was equally good with the AWP as the rifles, and he was a monster as a CT."



Dustin "Chameleon" Porter (syn/X3)



"I used to LAN with Dustin whenever I had the chance. This guy was a true gaming fanatic. He would experiment and test nades, wall shots, and timing for hours and hours in a server by himself. I would wake up from a nap, and he would have this notepad and be showing me all these things he found out. This is where I learned many of my nade and wall shot tricks. He was very competitive and did everything he could to win. Great team-mate."

RAMBO TEAMS PLAYED AGAINST



Schroet Kommando.Sweden (SK.swe)

"Respect them for their ability to contend for such a long time."



Fnatic

"Very consistent results, top 3 clan since they were made."



The Speakeasy Offensive (tso)

"Won an undefeated CAL-I season for the first time. They proved practice and teamwork can prevail"



Minjas in Pyjamas (NiP)

"Always fielded a solid team."



compLexity (coL)

"This team was intimidating. They practiced the way a professional team should practice, and it showed in their game play. Their execution was flawless. They could use the same strategy 8 times in a half and still win all of them because of execution."



=== zEx

"A very talented team. Even though zEx weren't that well known to the world, they had players that could compete against the best. Eventually proving that, they split to America's top teams."

RAMBO TEAMS PLAYED WITH



Riot-Squad (rs)

"This was my first team ever. It was a group of my local friends that lanned any chance we could. I'd say we were a top 5 team in the US at the time. We attended a lot of local events and some early BYOC CPLs. It included sickness, warsaw, speedmole, shiznit, crash and fiction."



Syndicate (syn)

"This was a merge between Riot-squad and TRU (the real untouchables) They were our toughest opponents on LAN and online, so we decided to merge the active members. This team didn't last too long, but I did meet a long time future team member Chameleon (porter)"



Clan Killers 3 (CK3)

"This was a top 3 team during its time. I had battled many times against them as Riot-squad and syndicate. They offered a starting position for me and asked me to play for them at a tournament a few hours drive from me. I ended up going, winning, and joining CK3 with Ksharp, BigDog and moto. CK3 ended up falling apart and the starting members creating Xtreme3."



Xtreme3 (X3)

"The starting line up included Rambo, Ksharp, BigDog, Chameleon, Bullseye and moto. We dominated the US scene for a couple of years with sheer skill."



Desire Discipline Dedication (3D)

"3D's starting line up: Rambo, Ksharp, Jaden, da bears and Bullseye. 3D ended up being my home for 5 years or so. There were a lot of up and downs, but most importantly some international championships. I went through a lot of teammates with this team and they were all legit quality players, but the nature of gaming tends to have a lot of roster shake ups. This is where I would play complexity over 50 times."



compLexity (coL)

"My current team. I've been living with the team for over a year now, and we've accomplished our goal of winning every tournament we play in. This roster is by far the most complete roster I've been in. It has a nice mix of players and skills that compliment each other."

STEEL EUENTS



"WCG 2001 was the first major event I attended, it was also the first huge event (\$20k+) featuring CS outside of the CPLs. This event was occurring at the same time as the CPL winter 2001 event which resulted in a split of the CS community, some preferring to attend the CPL while others won their countries' qualifiers and as a result won tickets to attend the WCG in Korea. Being the first official event the organization had held, there were some problems during this tournament but it still managed to retain the "big event" feel nonetheless.

The media coverage and general public interest for the event in Korea was the most shocking thing about this event in retrospect, as that level of media saturation was unseen in the west for another 2 years, when the ESWC series of events appeared. The championship match on stage was a pretty memorable experience simply because of the unmatched interest the Korean people had for gaming competition. The WCG really brought the bigger than life approach to running CS tournaments from my point of view, as the comparable North American event of the time (CPL 2001), while offering \$50k compared to the WCG's 40 was years behind in terms of organisation and the cultural aspect which the WCG concentrated upon.

This event was incidentally my first huge championship which at the age of 16 was a fairly impressive experience. Taking home the huge check practically cemented my enthusiasm to compete for the next 3-4 years. This event, compared to a CPL which is usually US-team dominated, had a much more varied international roster of teams which offered several different play styles that we as a team had never seen before.

Matches:



mortal Teamwork (mTw)

We played mTw three times in total at this event. In the winner's bracket final, they took us by surprise on de cbble with their much more refined AWP usage. We weren't quite ready to face their multiple AWPs in lots of the situations and were caught off guard early on in the encounter.



Allstars (All*)

After mTw took us down into the lower bracket, we were met by the Finnish all*, which featured among others natu and mysse who would remain in the top levels of CS competition for a while after this event. Both All* and ourselves (LnD) were very hungry to advance to the championship, both being vigorously beaten by mTw in the winner's bracket earlier on in the tournament. This match took place on de nuke, and this time it was our turn to take the opponents by surprise with very aggressive play as CT. All* later explained to me they were very surprised by the amount of spam we used to thwart their advances as well as the sometimes dangerously aggressive tactics we used to counter their fast play.



mortal Teamwork (mTw) - championship

We then faced mTw in the championship coming from the loser's bracket which meant we had to beat them twice in a row in order to take the 40 grand. After the coin toss, we received the first map choice and picked de aztec knowing mTw would have a hard time with our team which relied more on pure skill than anything else to win. Securing the win on the first map, we then played on their map choice, de dust2, to decide the championship. Bearing in mind their team had a more refined set of tactics and team-play, dust2 ended up being a good choice again for our frag/skill-oriented team and we beat them with fast splits and a generally rapid style of play to overpower them wherever we could.

The aftermath

Almost immediately after this event, we were offered several sponsorship opportunities that on the surface seemed interesting but once we scratched that surface, seemed less and less legitimate. For example, a Korean organisation offered to pay us salaries and lodging in Korea as professional gamers but wanted to immediately take a 25% cut of our winnings in order to establish that. With little to prove their legitimacy, we declined the offer as that 25% seemed like a fairly large amount to gamble on idle promises.

From a personal perspective, this event strengthened my reputation in the North American scene as a championship player mostly due to some big name American players being in attendance. Without this championship under my belt, it would have been much harder to get on a team that would pay my travel and lodging expenses for the upcoming CPL."



CPL Summer 2002 (GX)

"Playing with GX

I attended this event all expenses paid simply thanks to winning the WCG 6 months prior. tRiGGa was on the US representatives at that WCG and was now a part of [GX] which featured such big names as ex-X3 Porter as well as method. He invited me to play on this team a few months prior and I accepted this offer as it was the only way I could attend with a good team and without spending too much money to do so. GX was an interesting team at the time, considering we had several established veteran players but also some of the best individual skill in North America. Combine this with the fact we'd boot-camped for 3 weeks prior in Dallas with the local teams, and you can see how we managed to scrape a mostly unexpected 7th place finish.



mortal Teamwork (mTw) we meet again

The first big match we got to play at this event was against mTw, which consisted of mostly the same roster I'd faced 6 months earlier in Korea in the WCG championship match. This game truly tested our ability to stay focused after we were completely destroyed in the first half by a score of 2-10 as terrorists on the heavily T-favoured de dust2. Due in large part to some extremely well-timed 2vX wins by method and me; we rallied back and won the match by one round. This was easily the hardest match of the event just because of the mental weight hanging over our heads knowing that being sent to the loser's bracket that early into the

tournament would have been an impossible pit to get out of.

spacebar multiple overtimes

We then went on to play the Norwegian spacebar (featuring knoxville, bsl and naikon) on the then-new de clan1 mill map. Neither of our teams had practiced or scrimmed on that map a single time, which probably accounted for the closeness of this game. Spacebar featured the best aim players we encountered in the whole tournament, and considering how little team-play that GX team had (it was formed shortly before the event) the map evened out the playing field and allowed us to win in after multiple overtimes. Those particular overtimes were at that point in competitive history the most adrenaline-intensive rounds and situations I'd seen yet. In specific there was a 1v3 situation where I'd have to kill 3 terrorists on a pistol round and defuse to keep us in the match which was particularly intense. At this point in time, it became clearer the kind of consistent composure it took to stay level-headed under any type of pressure situation.

Personal aspect

This event was the first CPL I attended and due to playing consistently well I was noticed by a much larger part of the North American community than after the WCG win. This event was the doorway to me being invited to the reformed 3D team which was formed less than a month after."



Gamers-X vs Spacebar at CPL Summer 2002 / steel's POV

CPL Winter 2002 (3D)

The new 3D

Playing with the core of X3 represented an important step in my personal CS career considering I'd been playing against them constantly beforehand. Being invited into 3D even though their whole team was based in the USA made me realize I was an attractive player to the top teams even considering my location. Being in 3D also marked the first time I played in a somewhat organised environment strategy-wise. moto brought with him the ideas that rendered his previous team tso such a success. Combined with the skill level of the players involved, we had a dangerous combination. Going into this CPL, our confidence level was pretty high, even though we barely got to attend due to not having proper sponsorship at that point. Believe it or not, the 3D of 2002 had to ask for fan donations to even make it to the CPL event we'd end up winning.

Schroet Kommando.Sweden (SK.swe) on de_nuke

I was spectating this match as 3D had a six man lineup for this event. This SK line-up while missing some key players in its roster was still very dangerous and capable of capitalizing on any mistakes. 3D's strong deagle-save performance and team play in some situations (when Ksharp shielded a defuser at one point) really helped in getting the win though and the few mistakes on 3D's part really gave SK little room to win this one.

GameonLine (GoL)

We played GameonLine in the winner's bracket final on de_inferno. At the time, de_inferno was one of our stronger maps and our confidence level was soaring since we'd beaten HeatoN and Potti's SK.swe in the match before this one. We started off as CT and closed them out pretty handily. All ego aside, I had what was probably one of my best halves in this CT side. It's interesting to note as well that this GoL team

had mysse playing for them, who also played on All* at the WCG a year earlier.

Championship on de_dust2

3D started this match off with a bang, in an unplanned catwalk attack that ended in disaster for the terrorists (3d). The bomb-bearer ran to cat by himself and was killed and dropped the bomb. 3D won the match which was close but no teeth grinder in the end. The better team was clearly 3D at that point and it was only a matter of winning the key rounds without making too many bad mistakes.

Aftermath

This CPL championship was pretty important for North America from a sponsor point of view since besides being the first that an American team won, it in turn gave 3D a huge sponsorship by NVIDIA and CompUSA. This was a first in North American gaming. This CPL also marked the last time windows 98 would be used. This was important to me personally since I used (and was infamous for that fact) mouse acceleration which was radically different in windows XP."

Clikarena (3D)

"Clikarena was probably the most disappointing event I've attended barring the CXG. The reasons for this are pretty basic: the tournament was run terribly by inexperienced organizers and the prize-placing teams never received a dime. A shame too, because the location (Toulouse, France) and pool of teams were both very impressive. An example of the terrible organization of the event, is the fact it started over 48 hours late (keep in mind this was a three-day affair), which meant teams in the lower four groups (out of eight) had to play basically all their matches in a single day if they were to reach the later stages.

The admin-side of things was handled amateurishly and some of the less morally-concerned teams had their "coaches" or members of their organization running

back and forth in the tournament area relaying information to their team about their opponents while matches were taking place."



CPI Summer 2003 (3D).

"The event

Coming in extremely confident after having won the previous CPL, we (3D) were extremely hungry for another title and the \$60k that came with it. This single event represented the hugest 1-2-3 payouts ever seen in a counter-strike event and this fact combined with our win 6 months earlier meant 3D was in a very good position to double up.



a-losers de nuke

In the winner's bracket semis we faced off against German a-losers featuring the notoriously popular Johnny R. This match was far closer than the score revealed, as a-losers were able to bring almost every key round into a 1v1 or 1v2 situation that required a fair amount of work to win. Some of these rounds were extremely intense and tested our composure pretty significantly. We won the fair majority of these clutch rounds and took the match with a somewhat comfortable score (the win was hardly comfortable in its ease though)

Schroet Kommando.Sweden (SK.swe) on de_inferno winner's bracket final

We then went on to play against tournament-favourites (and eventual winners) SK in another match whose score would lead you to believe it wasn't as close as it actually was. This game was full of strong plays and intense comeback rounds. The intense rivalry between 3D and SK was in full swing during this match and we ended up taking a very difficult loss that could have went our way had we not made some had mistakes.



team9 de dust2

In the loser's bracket we played team9 to decide which of us would face off against SK in the championship and who would go home in 3rd place with only \$28k. Unfortunately we had to digest another extremely tough loss in an overtime match against the very organised team9. This match really came down to small mistakes adding up and costing us the whole game, especially the situation in the first OT when Rambo and myself lost a 1v2 that we could easily have won to seal the deal. To this day we are reminiscent of this particular play.

Aftermath

This event really cemented 3D as a powerhouse team on the international scene, proving the CPL win 6 months earlier was no fluke. This had the double edged sword effect of making us perhaps over-confident in our abilities, resulting in our strategies stagnating for the next year or so at least which ended up costing us several matches."



ESWC USA qualifier 2004 (3D)

"Background

This was probably one of the worst ways for a tournament to play out, as well as probably being the low point of my stay in 3D which lasted 3 years. We were soundly beaten by teams that weren't significantly better than our own. This is despite having been bootcamping in the Los Angeles area for over a week prior. The biggest factor in this crushing defeat was the fact our sleeping schedule became increasingly distorted due to negligence as the boot-camp advanced and by the time the tournament came up we could not in any way get a full night's sleep the day before we played. While not an excuse for the awful way we played at that qualifier, it was definitely a contributing factor into this under-performance.

The team as a whole was experiencing a performance vacuum at this point in time, notably because of a change to the in-game leadership as well integrating the loss of Bullseye. Had this team qualified for ESWC, it would have taken a miracle for it to perform in a top 5 manner."



CPL Winter 2004

"3D from the sideline

After their large success at the WCG 2004 leading up to this CPL, 3D decided to keep that line-up and use me as a reserve player. Due to this, I had the rare opportunity to see the team from a front row spectator role. I saw some bad habits that were going unnoticed and uncritiqued, a habit that is definitely not advantageous in the long run. I also saw some clear disconnections between the leadership and some players not used to the person calling at the time (boms)

This did not manifest itself early on in the tournament, but as the matches played out and the tough situations piled up, it became increasingly evident and spiralled the team downhill from the moment it hit a critical point. Arguing during a match is definitely something that cannot be accepted at a big-money event and this kind of incident ate away at the team's confidence until they were eliminated in the loser's bracket.

Skill-wise this team was on a very good level but the psychological aspect was definitely dragging down the team's morale and spirit."

STEEL PLAYERS PLAYED AGAINST



Jon "elude" Gilbert (TEC)

"Probably one of the stand-out players in North America to never really win any major championships, elude has always been a fan favourite thanks to his extremely fast reflexes and aggressive play style. From my point of view, this translated into a heightened degree of vigilance whenever we played his team, because he as a player could easily take out 3 or more of us if given the slightest chance. His ability to play with all the weapons at a very high level also made him someone with good consistency. If his aggressive style was met accordingly though, he could become ever more on the advance and this eagerness could often play to his disadvantage. Even then, though, he was still extremely dangerous especially in a situation when he had a weapon disadvantage and he was taken for granted."



Danny "fRoD" Montaner (united5)

"I hadn't met fRoD at the height of his career, having guit before that moment arrived but there are still some elements of his play that stood out. One of these being his excellent positional awareness. fRoD being known for his extremely good awp has always been a player that was at the right place at the right time. He had a very developed sense for waiting at a corner when you peek out and this paid off in his performance. He is also extremely adept at peeking and taking defenders

out with his ultra-fast awp reflexes. Playing against fRoD usually meant matching his style. In order not to be in a situation where he'd wait for you at a corner, it is usually best to have him come to you while you are advancing toward him, only then if he misses an AWP shot do you truly have a good chance to take him out."



Ola "element" Moum (GoL/SK)



"Element is a very interesting player, as on the surface he appears to be quite a clan hopper. But setting that aspect aside, his consistent ability to place highly at huge events has made him one of the most prominent players to ever grace the CS scene. His extremely guick reflexes and amazingly sharp game sense allow him to outshoot and outsmart almost any other player when given the chance. He also possesses an uncanny ability to feel out his opponents and counter them accordingly that few other players possess or can make the best use of. In element's case, the match to his play is really in breaking down his pattern. In order to beat him, you have to take the fight to him in the sense that you'd break the timing pattern of a usual match. Being the calculating player he is, element often takes for granted players will fall back at a certain time or through a certain area, playing unpredictably in this sense allows you more of an "element" of surprise."



Joona "natu" Leppänen (All*)

"natu's consistently good play especially with rifles really cements his top player credentials. natu is the kind of player whose aim is underestimated due to being based on spraying, but on closer examination one can notice this spray is extremely refined and perfected. His play style involves an instinctive style, where he plays out a default pattern and only changes it if the opponent's actions require it. To counter this, one needs to break his default pattern and force him to react quickly, in which case an opening might present itself. natu's easy-going attitude and humble approach make him someone very easy to play alongside."

Matt "bl00dsh0t" Stevenson (EG)



"Every time I've played him, he's never played at a level below something I'd define as great in skill. Very nice guy overall, has a great (rather reserved, but super-respectful) personality"

Antti "mysse" Larte (All*/GoL)

"mysse really enjoyed CS whenever I played against him and it showed in his game as well as outside. Was super outspoken in his opinion, which is rare in the CS community, very easy-going personality."

Michael "medias" Kim (WEW/GX/Rival)

"Very soft-spoken, concentrated on his game. Has a really strong skill set and never seems to get anxious/ nervous."

Josh "Dominator" Sievers (TSG/united5)

"Dominator was always a very tough opponent during my time in 3D, very high in raw skill and clutch ability. His aim rarely faltered so it was always a challenge playing him." Justin "sunman" Summy (zEx/TSG/united5)

"Sunman often had some very uncanny ability when I played against him, but seemed rather inconsistent in pulling it off day after day."

Marc "Mangiacapra" (I-eS/4kings)

"Mangiacapra, from my experience playing against him, always struck me as a very methodical player. No corner went unchecked and no 1vX situation was easy to win against him. His aim was also top notch even on a championship level, and put him a level above most of his peers in 4K for example."

Matt "quiksilver" Neville (TSO/nerve)



"A very good rifler, and unusually good at playing with high ping effectively (undoubtedly due to his west coast Canadian location)"



Jerry "Souledge" Carlund (GoL)

"Souledge's AWP and USP were extremely refined for his time, his reaction time being among the best I've seen in my career."

Johan "Hyb" Carlund (GoL)

"Hyb shared Souledge's excellent aiming and game sense but seemed to use a more well-rounded approach. By this I mean he played with all the weapons more sporadically whereas Souledge had a strong (and justified) preference for AWPing at a time when the weapon was used sparingly in championship environments."

STEEL PLAYERS PLAYED WITH



Ron "Rambo" Kim (3D)

"Rambo is probably one of the most consistent players I've played with. His experience level is above anyone else's and this is evident in his play style. Ronald prefers to increase his odds in every factor imaginable so as to almost guarantee he is always making the right moves, especially in clutch situations. His rifle abilities also reflect this steadiness and he rarely makes mistakes in his shooting style. Rambo is probably among the most experienced players still active in the sheer amount of matches played as well. His drive and dedication are also on a very high level. At the CPL winter 2002 Rambo played one of his best matches up to that point against SK.swe."



Sean "Bullseye" Morgan (3D)



"Bullseye was another type of player that could rely on his experience to make the right decisions in almost all situations. He rarely made the "wrong play" when it counted and could never be counted out as a menace in 1vX situations. His spray was very well controlled and his ability to use most of the weapons efficiently also helped keep his renown on a high level. Bullseye had a very easy-going character that translated into a very

cool-minded player that never succumbed to pressure, seemingly unaffected by pressure situations. This is evidenced in his performance against 4K where on the brink of losing the match and being eliminated from the tournament, he pulled off an amazing array of deagle kills to save our team."



Griffin "shaGuar" Benger (CDT)

"shaGuar is probably one of the least modest players I've encountered, his ego soaring to ever-higher levels at each event he attends. This cockiness helped shag perform at some very high-level tournaments but when things don't go his way, he can become extremely erratic and unpredictable, even to his own team. This extreme confidence plays the role of a double edged sword and could be beneficial as well as detrimental to his whole team depending on the situation. In his earlier career, his over-dependence on the AWP also made him a less rounded player overall and not one that could always be used to their full potential. It seems he's worked on this aspect as of late, at the time of this writing."



Mikey "method" So (GX)

"method is a player whose immense aim skill I've been aware of for a very long amount of time due to playing with him in GX. His ability to completely zone out and play the game purely out of instinct is something I've yet to see in any other players, and combining this with his ability to stay calm in tense situations has really benefited this gifted player. He's consistently performed at very high levels in endless amounts of big money tournaments and this consistency combined with his skill has given him a very high degree of respect in the CS community. At the CPL Summer 2002 against mTw, method was a key element to the comeback second half of the match that we needed to avoid being sent to the lower bracket early on. His ability to win multiple back to back 1v1 situations really allowed our team to stay in the game."



Harlem "reek" Ahua (xeno/LnD/CDT)



"reek was part of the [xeno] team that placed second (losing to X3|- in the final) at the 2001 Speakeasy CPL. The moment I joined xeno, reek basically taught me how to play the game competitively and with a team play-oriented approach. I spent the summer of 2001 scrimming with xeno against the then-top teams in the US, namely X3|-, and so my time in that clan propelled my CS "career" forward more than any other team I'd been a part of. As a player, reek in his prime undoubtedly had one of the most refined AWPs in the game as far as NA is concerned. He could use it dynamically in many situations, be it attacking or defending and did this on LAN during big money games. This was a very rare occurrence in 2001. reek and I attended WCG 2001 where we won \$40K with our French-Canadian team LnD. reek's interest in counter-strike dropped soon after this though, and he never quite reached his zenith in the game."



Kyle "Ksharp" Miller (3D)

"Kyle's pure skill is something to behold, really. I can only compliment him on his natural abilities in the game. His practice ethic and initiative to improve a team though are much more problematic. He is a very easy-going player and loves to have fun in the game, but his play suffers greatly if he isn't having a good time."



Johnny "boms" Quach (3D)

"boms was a good well-rounded player that knew how to handle tough situations and had a lot of fun playing CS."



Sal "Volcano" Garozzo (3D)



"Sal was one of the most underappreciated North-American players before his impressive tenure in 3D. He always impressed with his respectful attitude and consistent aim and smarts."

STEEL TEAMS PLAYED AGAINST



Xtreme3 (X3)

"Playing against X3 was always a challenge, considering they operated as five separate entities and were as a result extremely unpredictable. It was very hard to properly execute a "counter" strat to theirs since they had none in the first place. It was because of this that X3 was at its height one of the most difficult teams to play against. Five players that could take out a good part of your team given the chance running around the map simultaneously were quite scary indeed. X3 also knew how to use this to their advantage and played with a level of confidence that was really unmatched.

In order to play them properly, the best solution (and I use this word lightly) was usually to try and isolate single players of their team so as to battle them 1vx with numbers because clearly out-skilling X3 was rarely possible. In my early career, I got to play against X3 in xeno and later on LnD many many times and this really brought me closer to their level of play. Playing against the best is best."



Schroet Kommando, Sweden (SK, swe)

"SK's play style differed a lot less from X3's than one might think. They had the same vigour, confidence and endless skill as X3 but added the organisation element to top it off. During their 2-year dominance of the CS tournaments, SK pioneered what I'd call the disciplined

frag team approach. Combining the best skill in the game with some but not too much strategy and discipline resulted in a team that cleaned up at every tournament for more than a year.

SK's true expertise was felt in their ability to handle any type of pressure situation or comeback scenario without breaking a sweat. This somewhat underestimated ability is what truly differentiates a great team from a champion team. Playing against SK really came down to surprise. If you could pull of something to surprise them and beat their routine, you could hope to take some rounds away from them. Also, SK was an extremely energetic team and matching that intensity was a must to win against them."



Made in Brazil (mibr)

"This is probably the most explosive team I've ever played against. mibr truly shines in situations where they gain momentum as they can often ride that momentum energy until they win a match. Their skill potential having always been at or near the top of CS, they were often able to handily beat some extremely strong teams and secure championships. The downside to this momentum-loving play is that when they don't have this energy mibr would be a very unpredictable team. Often times they won tourneys coming in as underdogs and lose when they played as favourites. This is the key to beating a team like this, breaking their momentum with an even higher energy level early on in the match is really the only way to defeat them."



"During my stay in 3D, I got the chance to play against TEC at least twenty times. We knew all of this team's members very closely, some of them being ex-3D and due to this, there was an ever-growing rivalry between the two teams which you could say climaxed at the time TEC beat 3D at KillerLAN in 2003. Tec could be summarized as a mini mibr team that combines great skill with very good potential for explosive performance. I would venture to say that TEC were even more dependant on momentum than mibr was, as their ability to really ride momentum was unmatched in the North American scene. Unfortunately though, this over-dependence on momentum really hurt this team in the long run as without it, they were guaranteed to under-perform. Just as mibr, this team really had to be matched or outclassed in the energy level early on in the match, or a chain reaction of their momentum building up could easily translate into a defeat for me."



"Always showed up giving a good fight, never gave up until it was over. This team had a lot of skill but their chemistry wasn't super fine-tuned. They also (during the time I played against them) had some weaker players, especially on LAN when money was on the line. zEx's inability to hold a steady roster probably hurt them most in the long run, as their skill level was clearly very high."



"u5 had good execution strats-wise, and combined with some awesome up and coming players was very competitive with us. For whatever reason, though, they didn't stick together instead splitting up and forming new teams/joining others. U5 had great players and good team-play but their ambitions sometimes exceeded their conviction."

GameonLine (GoL)

"GoL was a very consistent team from the early era of competitive CS and always had some insane skill on their roster. They knew how to utilise this and kept their strategies simple but effective. GoL's ability to capitalize on momentum was ferocious, and once they started dominating an opponent, victory was definitely very easy for them."

Team Stomping Grounds (TSG)

"TSG is another team that had amazing skill, but was another NA team unable to hold a steady roster and they faltered because of this. Truly a shame, as they had much of the excellent zEx skill level and expertise. Had they stuck together longer, they surely could have fulfilled some great potential."

The Speakeasy Offensive (tso)

"tso's tenure as top North American team while relatively short-lived was extremely impressive nonetheless. This is especially true considering the team had, compared to their contemporaries, much less raw skill on their roster. The true difference was their extremely effective practice ethic and team-play/coordination. This mastery of team-play was revolutionary and immediately visible in their matches. Truly a remarkable team, especially for its time."

= spacebar

"A hugely skilled team, at the time one of the most talented in terms of raw ability."

STEEL TEAMS PLAYED WITH



Legends never Die (LnD)

"LnD operated very close to the American teams of the time, meaning a heavy reliance on pickoff and out-skilling the opponent. The one difference of note is that we functioned very fluently with the strategy calling; people would give input during a round and the leader would make a decision out of that. This was done on a very quick basis and some of the players rarely participated but those that did helped the leader make better decisions. Without a leader, this team would have been in trouble as we had a hard time adapting our strategy to an all-out FFA style of play. As a team, we had huge potential as evidenced by our WCG win but this was counter-balanced by the inactivity of the team following that championship. Had the team stuck together and stayed active, it certainly would have produced more interesting results.

One reason for the lack of integration of the team in the North American CS community is the fact that most of the team wasn't bilingual and could only communicate efficiently in French. This also made it hard to reform the team while keeping a very high level degree of skill as we had to recruit locally to Quebec and the talent pool was limited to say the least. This is evidenced by the poor performance at the 2002 WCG."



Desire Discipline Dedication (3D)

"Phase 1

This 3D represented the best North American team since X3, coincidentally using the same core players. The novelty came with the addition of moto, a dedicated leader that helped this core of super-skilled individuals to really get a much needed influx of team-play concepts. The functioning of this team relied heavily on the caller and his absence revealed some of the troubles of operating without him. The exclusion of kane led to boms joining due to the need for 5 American players to attend WCG.

Phase 2

During most of this phase, moto's leadership role was left in boms' hands. This was hardly beneficial, not directly by any fault of boms' but because his leadership style was much more fitting for his past teams (fragger-oriented teams which had little organisation). We never managed to get a good cohesion with boms in the leader's seat and this ended up hurting the team as a whole. After Bullseye's departure from the team, Volcano was picked up to fill the WCG void. His inclusion gave the team a new burst of energy and the team was in a way reborn. His easy-going attitude and no-frills mentality coupled with his consistent abilities as a player improved the team's chances greatly and helped them win a WCG (2004).

Despite having a great team, 3D at this point still couldn't manage to re-establish themselves as the premier American team at high calibre events. There was never a clear diagnosis for this but my personal view on it led me to believe there was simply too little cohesion happening on a consistent basis. This wasn't helped by the fact that some members were much more active and motivated than others."



Canadian Dream Team (CDT)

"CDT (a name I strongly despised) was basically a pug team comprised of several good eastern Canadian players among them shag and revenge. Despite a very high skill level within the team, we still did not manage to qualify for the WCG in the Canadian qualifier. This was due to a couple of factors one being the team chemistry never reaching a very good level, another was the unwillingness of one member to respect the practice schedule at all. Both of these factors combined pretty much doomed this effort."



GLOSSARY

There is a lot of terminology thrown around in the competitive Counter-Strike, this section should help explain many of these terms to the uninitiated.

Nade Grenade

AWP The most famous name for the AWM sniper rifle

AWP one who uses the AWP sniper rifle

Bomb The c4 device

Boost Lifting one player to a higher are

Flash Flashbang

Smoke Smoke grenade

Spray Bullets fired fully automatically from a rifle or in quick

succession in the case of a pistol

a in a map using another player's model.

Spam Sprayed bullets

Wall spam Shooting bullets through a wall



Wall bang Scrim – Scrimmage, an unofficial match

PCW Practice Clan War, the European variant of Scrim

CPL Cyberathlete Professional League

ESUC Esports World Cup

WCG World Cyber Games

CAL Cyberathlete Amateur League

Pug Pickup game, an unofficial game played under a competitive structure where players are picked or assorted

randomly to make up both teams.

Gather European variant of pug

Ringer A stand-in/replacement player not officially a member

of the team he is playing for

Merc Mercenary, the European variant of ringer

Strat Short for strategy, the tactic used in a round

Strat caller The player whose job it is to decide which strategy is

run each round

Clan European variant for team, originates from other FPS

games like Quake and Tribes where it was the de

facto name for team amongst communities.



Ninja Used to describe play considered to be sneaky such as defusing while enemies are still alive but unaware or knifing an opponent

Shanking Knifing a player, a variant from the Western coast of the USA

Newbie A term either meaning simply a beginner or a derogatory insult to imply a player plays as though he had just begun recently.

Newb A term either meaning simply a beginner or a derogatory insult to imply a player plays as though he had just begun recently.

Noob A term either meaning simply a beginner or a derogatory insult to imply a player plays as though he had just begun recently.

Nub A term either meaning simply a beginner or a derogatory insult to imply a player plays as though he had just begun recently.

CT Counter-Terrorist, the defensive player in the bomb/defuse game-mode of Counter-Strike

Terrorist, the offensive player in the bomb/defuse game-mode of Counter-Strike

Clutch Used to describe difficult situations where decisive plays must be made to close a round out



Ace Slang for when a player kills the entire opposing team in a single round by elimination.

IRC Internet Relay Chat, a text based chat medium. North American players can be found on the Gamesurge network while Europeans inhabit Quakenet

Sponsor A company or individual who provides resources or compensation to teams

Flank When a player moves around the back of an enemy, often from an unanticipated area

Split The term often used to denote a strategy where the team will split, so a 3-2 A split on de_dust2 would have 3 players going long A and 2 catwalk or viceversa depending on the arranged meaning

Fake A term used in strategies to mean pretending to go to one site to trick the enemy while intending all along to go to the other

Short for economy round (a.k.a. save round) when a team does not have the funds to buy full weapons and armour so chooses to save a unit

Bait Play where one player uses another as bait, this is often a negative aspect of play and the baiting player is simply trying to increase his own score instead of work to win the round



Baiter A name for players who engage in baiting play, this is

often an insult

Online Superstar A player who has a reputation for playing well on the

internet but has not performed well on LAN

LAN Local Area Network

Messagemode 1 Also known as world say, this is where any text en-

tered is transmitted to everyone in the same state as the player. if the player is alive dead players can read this text but if he is dead then alive players cannot.

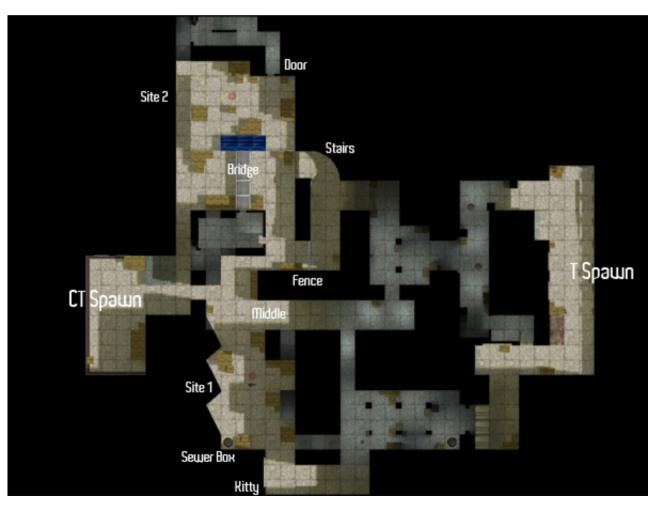
Messagemode 2 Similar to mode 1 except only readable by players on

the same team as the player. also known as team

say

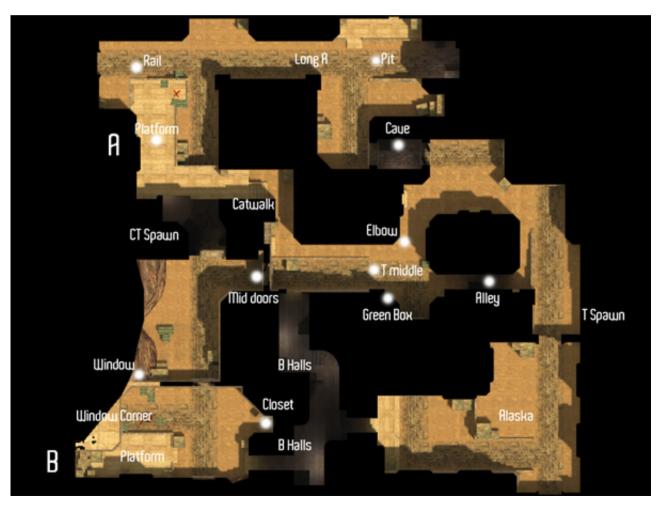


DE_CPL_MILL



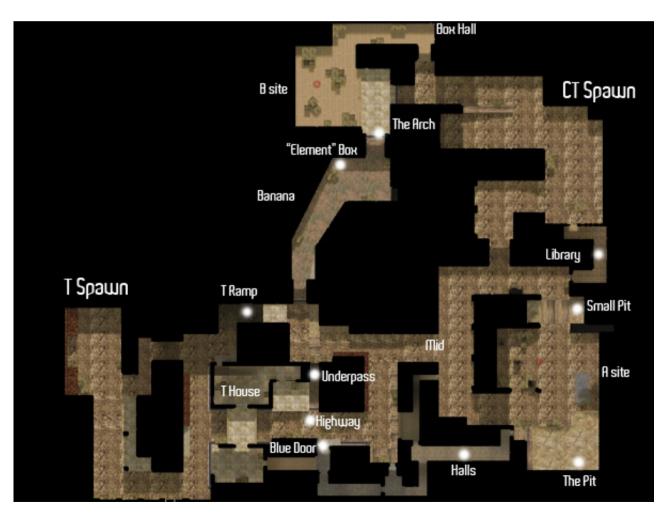


DE_DUST2



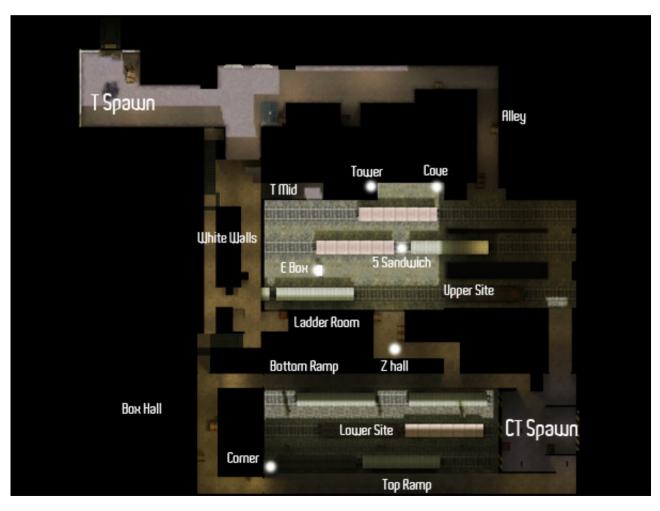


DE_INFERNO





DE_TRAIN





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